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SURVEY

AN ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL TRENDS IN THE SOVIET ORBIT

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FORTY YEARS AFTER

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Introduction :
PROSPECTS OF IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE

AN early visitor to revolutionary Moscow came back in 1919 with the sensational news that he had seen the future and that it worked. Lincoln Steffens was neither a profound nor a consistent political thinker; subsequently he believed he had seen the future in Mussolini's Italy, and it worked there too, at least for a time. But he was more correct in his appraisal than many contemporary critics of Bolshevism who doubted whether it was at all practical or could remain in power. In 1927, people were still talking about the Communist 'experiment,' but ten years later it had become fairly obvious that a political régime and a social system of a new type had come into being. After another ten years Orwell, writing his last book, had not the slightest doubt that 1984 would actually work. Forty years have passed this November since the Winter Palace in Petrograd was taken. It is an obvious occasion for stocktaking and for some speculation about the future development of the Soviet Union. The essays presented in the current issue of *Survey* are contributions to that end, in the somewhat specialised field of Soviet ideology.

An investigation of this kind is not made easier by the fact that some things in the Soviet Union have remained unchanged (for instance the nationalisation of the means of production and the political monopoly of the Communist Party) while other original features of Soviet society have changed out of recognition; even some of the keywords of the régime have assumed quite different meanings from those they originally possessed. It is enough to re-read Lenin's *State and Revolution*, written almost exactly forty years ago, to realise that the new Soviet society differs, and has been differing

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for most of the time, in many important respects from the image projected by the early Bolsheviks. The 'withering away of the state' has been postponed *ad calendas græcas*, the participation of female cooks in affairs of state has not been more pronounced there than in other known societies, and the dictatorship of the proletariat has become, at best, the rule of the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat —sometimes by one man, sometimes by a couple of individuals. On the credit side there has been great economic development, and Leninism still retains in 1957 much prestige in Asia as the theory of rapid industrialisation for backward areas. The Leninist theory of imperialism has become, as one writer has put it, the link between Communism and Asian resentments—hence its great appeal in Asia and its progress in that part of the world during the last decade. But this again indicates a tremendous change in the function of Communism, originally scheduled to be the pattern of social organisation for the most advanced countries, not for the under-developed.

The subject of our investigation is Soviet ideology; this has been for some considerable time now the Cinderella of the Communist movement. The majority of Western students have not thought Soviet ideology worthy of serious study and discussion, while in the East, too, the ideologists have on the whole been held in scant respect; to be an intellectual is once more to be slightly suspect; it is a synonym for one who wavers, who hesitates in times of crisis, who is too willing to embrace all kinds of 'foreign,' 'alien' influences. Western observers may be correct in their assumption that after a thorough study of the social sciences, and on the basis of an examination of developments both in West and East during the last forty years, few people would be likely to adopt the basic tenets of Soviet ideology. They tend to forget, however, that few people in the West have the inclination or the leisure to make such thorough studies and that the political decisions of the great majority are taken on a less sophisticated level and on the basis of less knowledge. Few people in the East find outward conditions propitious for such dispassionate study. Inside the Soviet Union a major, though perhaps logical, change has taken place; for Lenin's generation ideological capacity was the main criterion for the appraisal of a political leader. Today, and for a good time past, ideology has been relegated to a secondary position; the party ideologists are called upon to find justifications for a course of action already taken by the leaders. Nobody expects them to outline the future course of action. The leaders of today, people like Khrushchev, Bulganin and Mikoyan, may have many qualities, but an interest in the theory of Leninism or in any political theory at all is not conspicuous among them. As a result, some Western observers have reached the conclusion that one may safely disregard Soviet ideology which is no longer very important. But this is a gross misconception. Though the importance of ideology has undoubtedly greatly decreased and will apparently continue to decline, it still fulfils an important function. It may no longer satisfy the more advanced parts of the intelligentsia, but it is still a vital need in the training of cadres, and especially of party functionaries. It still is the cement that holds together Soviet society.

While Soviet ideology continues to offer plausible explanations at the popular level and for mass purposes, it is undoubtedly true that closer research in philosophy and psychology, economics and history, tends to generate serious doubts. It is this which explains why it has been unable to produce anything of importance for almost three decades. The engineers and builders can point to spectacular achievements; the social scientists, writers and painters have nothing comparable to offer. The constant complaints of Soviet leaders about the slackness, the 'lagging behind' of the historians, economists, philosophers, writers and artists are however misplaced. Their freedom of speech and action being so limited, they have really done the best they could in impossible circumstances. One of their main tools is historical materialism; and yet they have not been permitted to use it on the most obvious and nearest subject, Russian history after the revolution. It could be argued perhaps that the laws of historical materialism do not apply to the Soviet Union. Was not the 1917 revolution the famous leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom? And if so, has not

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man become at last master of his own destiny? It may be difficult in view of what has in fact happened in Russia to take this line, but on the theoretical level such an extremely voluntarist and indeterminist line might offer a possible way out of an otherwise impossible dilemma, and, in fact, Soviet ideologists are frequently forced into using such arguments. If one man, Stalin, is made responsible for the 'cult of personality' and all its terrible consequences, and if there is a total refusal even to examine the possibility that what happened was not the fault of one man, but the natural outgrowth of the specific political features of the totalitarian state, with its extreme concentration of power, this represents the approach to history which only the most 'idealist' (in the Soviet sense of the word) philosopher can accept. But in fact, of course, such a major revision of doctrine has never been officially sanctioned. Atomic scientists may be permitted to disregard Engels' and Lenin's dicta whenever the old axioms impede their progress. But economists, historians and philosophers are engaged in less dramatic research, and in any case they are not expected to provide a clear lead or guidance. They are not there to make fresh discoveries—for all discoveries in their respective fields have already been made—but to solve the concrete problems put to them. Hence the impasse.

Ideology was regarded by Marx and Engels as the superstructure based on and changing with the relations of production. In the Soviet Union it has largely become the superstructure of political power. This makes it immensely hazardous to engage in any speculation as to its possible future development. Some of its present elements are undoubtedly highly fortuitous; there is, for instance, no certainty that Soviet ideology will continue to put so much stress on Pavlov, or neo-Pavlovism, in the natural sciences. Pavlov, after all, was not a Leninist—he was not even a materialist, and the link between Pavlov and dialectical materialism which seemed highly convenient at one time may become something of a burden in future. Soviet ideology has been deeply committed in this as in other fields and as Soviet prestige is involved a retreat may be difficult. But more complicated operations have been executed; to preclude such a development would mean to underrate the malleability and flexibility of Soviet ideology.

In a short-range view no important changes in Communist ideology should be expected. On the contrary, the general trend over the last year or two has been away from 'liberalism' and back to the old rigid system of beliefs. It has been realised that once a little freedom is granted (to the writers, for instance) things can get out of control, and the whole ideological edifice may start crumbling. The cardinal strength of this closed system lies after all in its monolithic character; once major revisions are permitted, once some doubts are allowed to creep in, a serious breakdown may follow. The present state of affairs is perhaps best illustrated by the new edition of a textbook of Soviet history, published as these lines are being written (*Istoriya SSSR*, Part III, for the 10th forms of secondary schools, edited by the late M. Pankratova, Moscow, 1957). This book gives of course far less space to Stalin than the previous editions of the same volume, or than any other Soviet history written before the 20th Party Congress. It appraises favourably Stalin's rôle in the 'twenties, including his struggle against 'deviationists,' but hardly ever mentions him after 1932, by which time his power had become total. The big purges of 1936-38 are not mentioned at all. The chapter dealing with the development of the Soviet Union after 1945 is a summary of the main features of the fourth and fifth five-year plans, with three and a half lines devoted to the resolution against the 'cult of personality.' There is not the slightest admission of any mistake ever committed by anybody,[1] a feat achieved by omitting to mention some of the most important trends and events in recent Soviet history. Such an approach may be satisfactory in so far as the pupils of the upper forms of secondary schools are concerned. For university students this new line will probably not be good enough. Clearly, the present attitude can only be regarded as a transitory

[1] Soviet foreign policy is invariably justified. The pact with Hitler in 1939 is approved (p. 227) and about the Finnish War of 1939-40 it is stated, with lapidary brevity: 'In November, 1939, Finland entered into war against the Soviet Union' (p. 229).

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phenomenon; sooner or later more explicit explanations will have to be given. One possibility, of course, is that historians will have to revert to the old approach, with perhaps some minor and inessential revisions. There is however another possibility, namely a growing divergence between the exegesis for and by the initiated, and the popular version. Soviet historians (and philosophers and economists) may be given a freer hand in their specialised studies on condition that this will not lead to wholesale revision in the popular presentations, and that no topical political conclusions will be drawn. But this way, too, is highly unsatisfactory, and moreover it is applicable only in the more specialised fields. One cannot, for instance, envisage a grant of freedom to Soviet writers that would not at once have direct political repercussions. In some of the less enlightened Right-wing dictatorships, past and present, subversive books and periodicals (of socialist and Communist origin, for instance) have been permitted to enter in French and English versions, though not in the local language, the tacit assumption being that the intellectuals likely to read them are 'infected' anyway and politically without influence.

From the point of view of a dictatorship the situation tends to become dangerous only if there are links between the intelligentsia and the 'masses'; at times it has not been too difficult to 'contain' the intellectuals and their subversive ideas. On the other hand it is doubtful whether such an arrangement would really work for any length of time in a country with a very different and much more streamlined dictatorship, which has lasted for many years and in which considerable sections of the population have been taught to take political ideas and ideologies seriously—in contrast frequently to the West. A last possibility, though perhaps at present the least likely, is a genuine revision of official Soviet ideology in the light of recent history, and recent developments in the social and natural sciences. Such a re-examination would presumably proceed from such basic social and economic features of life in the Soviet Union as the nationalisation of the means of production and central economic planning and also from the explicit recognition that the Soviet Union is one of the two big powers in today's world. Short of a cataclysm, any refashioned Soviet ideology would have to be based on these facts. As to the rest, a critical re-examination would lead to the conclusion that Leninism had outlived its usefulness because it could offer no help in the solution of problems that neither Lenin nor any other early Communist leader could have envisaged. It would have to take into account the changes that have occurred in the world outside Russia during the last forty years, to analyse anew problems such as nationalism and imperialism (that were believed to have been solved a generation ago) and to investigate new phenomena such as the 'revolution from above' and the management of economic and political affairs in an industrial society, which is a far more complex problem than the early Communists ever realised. It would have to review those fields where Communist organisation has not been an outstanding success, such as agriculture, and it would have to give some thought to the relations between Communist countries. From an 'idealist' point of view, Stalin and Beria could of course be saddled with the blame for the crisis in relations between the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia (and the 'popular democracies' in general). But for a historical 'materialist' this explanation could not be satisfactory.

Lenin believed he had discovered an historical law according to which the unequal development of leading capitalist nations inevitably led to conflicts between them, and eventually to world war. But there has also been an unequal development within the 'socialist camp,' and conflicts have followed from this indisputable historic fact. Were these conflicts really all 'non-antagonistic'? At this point the ideologists would be moving from dangerous ground on to a minefield. For an examination of Soviet development over the last thirty or forty years would undoubtedly entail a critique of 'Soviet democracy,' an investigation into the nature of the new élite that has emerged, the political and social results of a one-party dictatorship, and the control of that party by one man, or a handful of men. But since all this would menace large vested interests, undermine them, and reach

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conclusions detrimental to their power, it is difficult to imagine such a revolution in Soviet thinking unless it were preceded by a revolutionary change in political power. This brings us to the more general question of the probability of radical change in the Soviet Union. Whether Tukhachevski is rehabilitated by the historians and Isaac Babel by the litterateurs is, of course, a matter of considerable interest. But the rehabilitation of those who are no more among the living does not necessarily have any great impact on current events. Non-Leninist and anti-Stalinist ideas have so far not been rehabilitated. There have been some reforms but no revolutionary change. But is there much difference between a great reform and a small revolution? Is not a reform a small revolution?

These were the questions which the late H. G. Wells asked the late Josef Stalin in a conversation on July 23, 1934. And Stalin replied, quite correctly, that rulers may sometimes concede partial reforms while remaining on the basis of the existing system. In acting this way, they calculate that these concessions are necessary to preserve their rule; this is the essence of reform. Revolution, however, means the transference of power, and that is why it was impossible (according to Stalin) to describe any reform as revolution. There is much truth in this observation: A revolutionary change in Soviet ideology would seem to be feasible only with and after the disappearance of the party monopoly of official truth and the political leadership as the supreme ideological judge. Or can a change from *within* the party in the direction of freedom and democracy be envisaged? This would involve a voluntary decision to abstain from exercising absolute power, an event without historical precedent.

In the same year that Lincoln Steffens returned from Moscow, another Westerner who had been there, Bertrand Russell, in a short book asked whether it is not almost inevitable that those who hold the monopoly of power will be loath to relinquish it, and will find reasons for remaining in power until some new revolution ousts them. Russell went on to ask what motive they would have for doing otherwise. The same question remains now, almost forty years later. A gradual change from within is perhaps not impossible, since there are no impossibilities in history. But at this juncture it requires a powerful imagination even to picture the conditions in which this could conceivably happen, so remote does it appear.

W.Z.L.

THE YEAR 1917

New Publications on Party History

by S. V. Utechin

THE years 1956 and 1957 have produced a quite unusual crop of publications in the Soviet Union dealing with the Bolshevik Party in 1917. This has been partly for the obvious reason of the approaching 40th anniversary of the 'Great October Socialist Revolution,' yet nothing comparable happened in 1947 or 1937. One would have to go back to 1927 to find a spate of publications at all similar to the present one (although in fact the output was greater then). Thus a second reason becomes discernible—a negative one: the absence of Stalin's autocracy. But there were also more specific positive reasons. At the 20th Party Congress the history of the Party and of the October Revolution were singled out by Mikoyan as subjects which had hitherto been particularly neglected or distorted. This criticism, immediately echoed by Pankratova, was given currency as the official view of the Congress. Finally, the Central Committee of the Party, in its decision about the celebration of the 40th anniversary, resolved 'in the course of the preparation for the celebraiton of the October anniversary to spotlight in the press and in oral propaganda the most important political events of the period of the preparation and carrying out of the October socialist revolution.'[1]

The climate of official opinion has not been the same throughout 1956 and 1957: a marked change occurred after the revolutionary crisis of last autumn which culminated in the Hungarian revolution. Whereas before then the general atmosphere was more conducive to honest research as opposed to the fabrication of myths and fictions usual in Stalin's time, and was specifically anti-Stalin also, after the events of last autumn there has been renewed stress on

[1] *Pravda*, 17.2.1957.

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the Party spirit[2] and efforts have been made to emphasise Stalin's 'positive' achievements.

Many of the recent publications are not yet available in this country, so that this essay is necessarily based on a limited number of sources. Apart from fiction, the published material consists of documents, reminiscences and analytical studies. Comparatively few new documents have so far been published; most had already been published before and their selection has been purely propagandistic. The exceptions are the correspondence between the Bolshevik Central Committee and some local organisations in October-November, 1917, a full list of addresses of the local party organisations in 1917-1918,[3] and documents of local or regional character issued in some republics and provinces. However, the forthcoming series 'The Communist Party in the Period of Dual Power' (February-June, 1917) and 'The Communist Party in the Struggle for the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution,' to be published by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, are said to contain a number of new documents. Of real importance will be the 'Protocols of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. (B), March, 1917-February, 1918,' also promised by the same Institute. Protocols of March-July, 1917, have not been published before, and what is known of them (*cf.* references by Burdzhalov in *Voprosy Istorii*, No. 8, 1956 and Bayev in *Voprosy Istorii K.P.S.S.*, No. 1, 1957) suggests that they may throw light on several complicated problems.

Far more numerous and much more publicised are the reminiscences of participants in the revolution. There are three main forms in which these have been published: large collections, such as *The October Armed Rising in Petrograd*[4] (containing 32 pieces) or *Reminiscences of V. I. Lenin*[5]; individual reminiscences, such as V. Antonov-Ovseyenko's *In the Revolution*, or the chapters on 1917 in the reminiscences of Sverdlov by his widow; and, finally, reminiscences published in journals and magazines.

The use of source material appears even to some Russian historians to be unsatisfactory. Reviewing the first volume of the *Reminiscences of V. I. Lenin*, V. V. Pentkovskaya wrote: 'It is surprising that . . . elementary rules of publication have not been adhered to. It is not indicated whether a particular reminiscence has been published before, where and when, or whether it is being published for the first time from manuscript . . . it is necessary to make sure that cuts should not distort the proportion and truthfulness of the reminiscences. . . . Even if he [*i.e.*, the compiler] considers it necessary for one reason or another to leave out particular fragments, he must point it out in the preface, in footnotes, etc. Unfortunately, this condition has not been fulfilled in the collection under review.'[6] The other publications are as a rule not much better. For example, the Preface to *The October Uprising* says simply: 'The majority of these reminiscences were published during 1919-30 in the journals *Proletarskaya Revolyutsiya, Katorga i Ssylka, Krasnaya Letopis'*, etc. . . . Some reminiscences are given with insignificant cuts.' In fact, some of the pieces in this collection appear to be new, while among the others are reprints not only from the journals listed but also from *Byloe, Voenny Vestnik, Ogonëk*, the newspapers *Pravda* and *Petrogradskaya* (later *Leningradskaya*) *Pravda*, and of separate brochures.

The vast majority of all these reminiscences are re-issues of material published in the 1920s or early '30s. The small amount of new material is chiefly found in the journals, particularly in *Novy Mir, Oktyabr'* and the new Leningrad monthly *Neva. Oktyabr'* has published *inter alia* Podvoysky's 'Lenin in 1917' (nos. 4 and 5, 1957);

[2] 'It is necessary to be strictly guided by the Leninist principle of militant *partiinost* in science, to conduct irreconcilable struggle against any attempts whatsoever to distort historical truth, against revisionism, dogmatism. . . . Marxist-Leninist *partiinost* is the expression of genuine scholarship; it enables one to reflect profoundly and truthfully the historical process, to uncover the essence of phenomena in their interconnection.' *Voprosy Istorii K.P.S.S.*, No. 1, 1957, p. 12.

[3] *Istoricheski Arkhiv*, Nos. 5 and 6, 1956.

[4] *Oktyabrskoye vooruzhennoye vosstaniye v Petrograde*, Leningrad, 1956, 424 pp.; henceforth referred to as *The October Uprising*.

[5] *Vospominaniya o V. I. Lenine*, vol. 1, Moscow, 1956, 560 pp.

[6] *Voprosy Istorii*, No. 1, 1957, p. 130.

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Novy Mir published in its November, 1956, issue reminiscences by Stasova entitled 'On the Eve,' and in each issue from April, 1957, a number of other new reminiscences have been published; from May of this year, *Neva* has published reminiscences dealing with the corresponding month in 1917. Of all the authors, Podvoysky and Stasova are the only ones who in 1917 were in a position of importance among the Bolsheviks: the former was the head of the Central Committee's Military Organisation and chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee which carried out the *coup* in Petrograd[7]; the latter, a secretary of the Central Committee.[8] Podvoysky's reminiscences date from 1922-24; fragments of them have been published at various times, and the piece in *Oktyabr'* is only partly new. Stasova's piece in *Novy Mir* is new, and although at 83 her memory of these 40-year-old events is not altogether reliable, as is pointed out in *Voprosy Istorii K.P.S.S.*, it throws light on one or two important points. She discusses and explains the composition of the Central Committee (or, strictly speaking, the Russian Bureau of the C.C.) after the February revolution. She unmistakably supports Shlyapnikov's and Trotsky's contention that Stalin and Kamenev, after their return from banishment, were at one in imposing on the Central Committee and on the editorial board of *Pravda* a somewhat conciliatory policy towards the Provisional Government and the Mensheviks until the arrival of Lenin from Switzerland. She also gives one more example of Lenin's usual practice of fixing the composition of the ostensibly elected Party organs: relating the story of how she and Krupskaya did not become Central Committee members at the 6th Congress, she reveals that the composition of the Central Committee was decided on in private conversations between Lenin and Sverdlov.[9] Finally, Stasova describes the nature and scope of the work of the Central Committee's Secretariat in 1917.[10]

The other reminiscences that are new come from people who had played very minor rôles in 1917, and the majority of them merely highlight details of well-known events.[11] There are one or two exceptions. M. V. Fofanova establishes the date of Lenin's return to Petrograd from Finland—September 22 (not early October as has been widely believed), tells of Lenin's correspondence with Zinoviev during the last ten days before the *coup*, and describes his mental and emotional state at that time. M. L. Sulimova gives interesting information about the work of the St. Petersburg Committee's (later Central Committee's) Military Commission. I. Yeremeyev relates how the workers of the Putilov works in Petrograd were organised to take part in the 'spontaneous' meeting to greet Lenin on his arrival from abroad; his story shows incidentally that even then the Communists were masters in the art of producing demagogic effects. And S. Lyzlov tells how the illegal printing of the newspaper *Worker and Soldier* (which replaced *Pravda* after the 'July days') was organised.

The far greater number of re-issues of reminiscences already published previously contribute nothing new, of course, to the study of the revolution itself. Yet they are revealing as evidence of current trends. Most of them had been originally published during the 1920s, and it is interesting to note that the first edition has normally been used as the basis for the re-issues,

[7] N. I. Podvoysky (1880-1948) joined the party in 1901 and apart from the war years, 1914-16, was active in underground work, specialising on 'technical' and military work. He took a leading part in the creation of the Red Army and in the Civil War, but following Stalin's rise to power fell into obscurity, though he was not actually imprisoned; his death passed unnoticed.

[8] Ye. D. Stasova, b. 1873, an old Social Democrat and adherent of Lenin since the days of Iskra. She worked constantly either in the central Party apparatus or in important regional committees both before and after 1917 until 1937, when she disappeared from public life, to re-appear again after Stalin's death. Together with the few other surviving old Bolsheviks, she is now to the forefront on important propagandistic occasions, upholding the 'Leninist ancestry' of the present Central Committee whenever necessary.

[9] An attempt in *Voprosy Istorii K.P.S.S.* (No. 1, 1957, p. 205) to refute this account is unconvincing.

[10] Articles in *Voprosy Istorii* by K. T. Sverdlova (No. 6, 1956) and F. I. Drabkina (No. 9, 1956) have partly the character of reminiscences. The information contained in them supports Stasova's evidence.

[11] According to *Voprosy Istorii K.P.S.S.* (No. 1, p. 205) there are hundreds of interesting memoirs in the archives; one can only hope that they will be published in the not-too-distant future.

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even in cases where a later edition, of the Stalin period, existed; such later editions, indeed, have in many cases apparently not even been consulted—occasionally to the detriment of the re-issue when the edition of the Stalin period actually contained new facts. All the reminiscences have been edited to a greater or lesser degree for re-issue, so that some (sometimes much) of the original colour and individual or period stylistic peculiarities are lost.

But there are also numerous alterations of substance, and these are very instructive. Most striking and most frequent is the omission of certain names as compared with the earlier editions. There are two consistent omissions: Trotsky's name wherever the context would suggest the outstanding rôle he played in the October *coup*, and Zinoviev's name in connection with Lenin's return from abroad and his hiding between July and October. The manner of omission will be clear from the following examples. A. Khokhryakov (Chairman of the Regiment Committee of the Volhynia Regiment) wrote in his reminiscences: 'It was known that Comrade L. D. Trotsky would make a special appeal to the garrison at this meeting. The meeting opened at 10.20. Trotsky took the platform. In compact but strong words he described the situation.'[12] In the new edition this is replaced by: 'At this meeting the situation was described in compact but strong words.'[13] The same author, writing about the determined attitude of Bolshevik-minded army units on a particular occasion, remarked: 'They were sent by Smolny [*i.e.*, the Bolshevik Headquarters] by Trotsky "himself" . . .'; in the new version 'by Trotsky "himself" ' is omitted. Or again, N. Sveshnikov, having remarked that the Petrograd proletariat was getting more and more Red, continued: 'It forced the conciliators [that is, in the Bolshevik slang of the time, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries] to release from prison Comrade L. Trotsky, who from this moment became the central figure . . . at first *de facto*, and when the conciliators . . . called the Petrograd Soviet, *de jure*—L. Trotsky became Chairman of the Soviet.'[14] The new issue runs: 'In the Petrograd Soviet the Bolsheviks had an overwhelming majority, and when the conciliators . . . called the Petrograd Soviet a Bolshevik became Chairman of the Soviet.'[15] On the next page the author, referring to the stormy discussions among the Bolsheviks on the question of the uprising, said that Trotsky, Stalin and Feliks Dzerzhinsky were 'hotly defending the determined steps recommended by Lenin'; now it is 'Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov, Stalin, Feliks Dzerzhinsky and many others. . . .' N. A. Yemelyanov's reminiscences 'The Mysterious Tent,' published in *Krasnaya Letopis'*, No. 4, in 1922, had the sub-title 'Reminiscences of Comrade N. A. Yemelyanov about the Illegal Period of Life of Comrades Lenin and Zinoviev after July, 1917'; in the new version (*Reminiscences of V. I. Lenin*, Vol. 1) Zinoviev is not mentioned at all, and Lenin is made to hide alone.

In at least one case a third name is significantly omitted—Stalin's. In Podvoysky's memoirs, published in instalments in 1923, the following sentence occurs: 'At about 12 o'clock next day Lenin appeared at my headquarters and demanded that a desk for him should be put in my room and declared that he wanted to be kept constantly *au courant*, adding that the Council of People's Commissars had detailed him, Stalin and Trotsky to help me'[16]; in a version included in the collection *Lenin in the First Months of Soviet Power*, published in 1933, the words 'adding . . . to help me' were omitted but Stalin was made to appear at the Headquarters together with Lenin somewhat earlier; and now,[17] neither Trotsky nor Stalin is mentioned, and Lenin intervenes alone—a remarkable example of progressive 'unpersoning' in history!

Sometimes a different technique is adopted. Instead of omitting the names of people like Trotsky and Zinoviev, the editing is such as to show them in an unfavourable light. It is

[12] *Krasnaya Letopis'*, No. 2, (17), 1926, p. 44.

[13] *The October Uprising*, p. 93.

[14] *Krasnaya Letopis'*, No. 6, 1923, p. 305.

[15] *The October Uprising*, p. 312.

[16] *Krasnaya Letopis*, No. 8, footnote on pp. 38-9.

[17] *Reminiscences of V. I. Lenin*, Vol. 1, p. 554; *Oktyabr'*, No. 4, 1957, p. 165.

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interesting, for example, to compare the two accounts of Nevsky's meeting with Zinoviev a few days before the October *coup*—the one published in 1922, the other now. The earlier text reads thus:

'Next day [October 16] at about 9 o'clock in the evening, there appeared in the office of our [*i.e.*, of the Bolshevik Central Committee's] Military Organisation . . . Comrade Shotman, who suggested that I should see Comrade Zinoviev. I was very pleased, both because I had been connected with him by bonds of long-standing comradely work ever since 1906 in St. Petersburg, and especially because I wanted to know the views of himself and of Comrade Lenin, with whom he was sharing life in hiding. It was very tempting to see Comrade Zinoviev, who was being so vigorously hunted by the enemies of the revolution, although there was a fear of inadvertently betraying his hiding place if I visited him.

'. . . There stood, smiling, Comrade Zinoviev, unrecognisable and strange with a completely changed appearance; his bushy hair had disappeared, a kind of shaven actor's face. Also there, smiling and hovering, calm as usual, was Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin.

'We kissed each other . . . I was first of all astonished by the surprising knowledgeableness displayed by Comrade Zinoviev. He knew not only what and how our organisations were thinking, but was fairly correctly evaluating the mood of the masses as well. One could only marvel how people isolated in a forest, cut off from reality, could give a correct evaluation of that fierce struggle boiling around us. Asking precisely and attentively about even the minutest details of this struggle, Comrade Zinoviev also [*i.e.*, like the Military Organisation] apparently inclined to the view that it was necessary to prepare carefully and thoughtfully for that blow which we were going to deliver to our enemy in order not to get into an even more difficult situation than the one we had got into in July, 1917.

'Comrade Kalinin, who for some time had been listening silently to our conversation, suddenly remarked with a cunning smile: "The uprising will still take place and much sooner than we all expect. And we must not oppose this. . . ." Comrade Zinoviev pondered for a moment and then again briefly but clearly pointed out those weak spots in our preparations which were unnoticed by us who were directly seething in the organisational rush. Precisely and not without humour he pointed out our mistakes, and it only remained for me to be thankful . . .

'. . . "Well," said Comrade Zinoviev, "we shall soon meet in more favourable circumstances! All the best, see you soon!"

'He was not mistaken; in something like a week both he and Comrade Lenin were no longer hiding, they were speaking with full voices . . . to the whole world in the name of the proletariat of the whole of Russia.'[18]

The newly concocted version shows a very different attitude towards Zinoviev:

'But some comrades who did not believe in success were hoping that the appeal by the Military Organisation for a painstaking preparation would drag out altogether the question of the uprising and that it would perhaps not take place.

'These comrades succeeded in bringing influence to bear on us. One night I was told that Zinoviev wanted to see me. That was a few days before the uprising.

'A comrade came to me from M. I. Kalinin and asked me to see him on important business. I agreed, and we went, taking measures not to be followed. Having come to Comrade Kalinin and greeted each other friendlily, I suddenly saw to my surprise G. Ye. Zinoviev coming into the room. Although he had changed his appearance I immediately recognised him. He heartily shook my hand and started asking me questions about the situation and mood of the Petrograd garrison. Although I described the fighting mood of the garrison, Zinoviev, having listened to me, came to the conclusion that our victory was not guaranteed and that therefore we should hardly strike.

'I expressed my opinion that whether we wanted it or not, things had gone so far that the uprising would take place anyway and the revolution would sweep us away if we didn't succeed in leading the movement. Comrade Kalinin, who had been silent all the time, now hotly supported me and recommended that we should prepare for the struggle even more energetically, since the uprising was no longer far off.

'However, we did not succeed in changing Zinoviev's mind.'[19]

Analytical studies have been much less numerous than publications of reminiscences. The spirit in which they were at first undertaken after the 20th Party Congress is shown by the following quotation from the editorial in *Voprosy Istorii*, No. 3, 1956, entitled 'The Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U. and the Tasks of Research in Party History.' The article, probably written by Burdzhalov, thus described the situation before the Congress:

'The cult of I. V. Stalin led to a direct distortion of historical truth. It prevailed in the literature on Party history with the appearance in the middle thirties of the anti-scholarly and harmful brochure by Beria on the history of Party organisations in Georgia and Transcaucasia which was based on

[18] 'Two Meetings,' *Krasnaya Letopis'*, No. 4, 1922, pp. 143-4.

[19] *The October Uprising*, p. 151.

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tenuous evidence and direct falsifications. All previous works on Party history were thrown away. Works by such a major Party historian as Ye. M. Yaroslavsky began to be considered doubtful, while the authors of other text-books on Party history—A. S. Bubnov, V. G. Knorin, V. I. Nevsky, N. N. Popov—were vilified and their works removed.'

Turning to the notorious *Short Course,* the editorial said:

'. . . each statement . . . of the *Short Course* was made into a dead dogma. Scholarly books, brochures, articles, dissertations were "fitted" to this popular text-book. . . . Party historians ceased to collect and study new facts. The importance of archive materials as historical documents was subject to doubt, moreover the majority of these documents became inaccessible for the research worker. The study of the sources of Party history was absent. Uncovering of new sources . . . was considered unnecessary and even reprehensible. The overwhelming majority of dissertations were nothing but compilations of quotations and disjointed facts, and to a considerable extent repeated each other. Previous writings on party history were suppressed as valueless. Research into Party history was losing its scholarly character.'

And further:

'Particularly many defects and errors are contained in the works dealing with the history of the Bolshevik party at the time of the Great October socialist revolution.'

A serious attempt has been made to do away with this heritage. The study of sources has been tackled in several ways. The archives made available for research by the Government's Decree of February 7, 1956, are being surveyed and preliminary reports on their content have been published. Efforts are made to utilise the memory of the surviving participants of the revolution. There are theoretical studies discussing the problems of the sources of party history in general, and of the selection and preparation for publication of documents on the October revolution. It is interesting to note the treatment given to the problem of utilising documents signed by people who were later liquidated: 'Many important documents, which are the result of collective leadership and correctly reflect the Party policy, were not put into academic circulation and were groundlessly classified as secret because they had been signed by persons who were later removed from leadership. . . . The question of utilising such documentary materials in the interests of Soviet science must be solved by research institutions and research workers in each concrete case, according to the content and the historical and political significance of the document.'[20] Finally, several recent publications of documents and memoirs have been reviewed and sometimes sharply and justly criticised. The present state of scholarship in the field of source study is well illustrated by the reference in *Istoricheski Arkhiv*[21] to the minutes of the All-Russian meeting of party functionaries in March, 1917, as 'not yet published anywhere.' In fact, they were published by Trotsky in 1932[22] and are well known abroad. The authors of the article either did not know this publication or were afraid or not allowed to mention it.

By contrast, historiography has so far fared badly and is virtually confined to an article[23] on the treatment of outstanding Bolsheviks in the 2nd edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopædia* which points out that some of the principal actors in the October events are simply not included, and to brief historiographical sections in the editorial of *Voprosy Istorii,* No. 7, 1957, and in Dykov's article on the Military Revolutionary Committee in the same issue.

As for the studies of the various aspects of Party history in 1917, they are comparatively few. The most important of them are concerned with the tactical line of the Bolshevik leadership immediately after the February revolution and were written by Burdzhalov, former deputy editor of *Voprosy Istorii,*[24] Bugayev[25] and Drabkina.[26] The treatment of the subject by the first two authors, and their arguments, have already been discussed in this *Survey.*[27]

[20] *Istoricheski Arkhiv,* No. 3, 1956, pp. 172-3.

[21] No. 3, 1957, p. 219.

[22] L. Trotsky, *Stalinskaya shkola fal'sifikatsii,* Berlin, 1932, pp. 225-290; Engl. trans.—L. Trotsky. *The Stalin School of Falsification,* N.Y., 1937, pp. 231-301. A comparison with the above-mentioned article by Drabkina shows that Trotsky's text is authentic.

[23] *Voprosy Istorii,* No. 5, 1956.

[24] *Voprosy Istorii,* Nos. 4 and 8, 1956.

[25] *Partiinaya Zhizn',* No. 14, 1956, and *Voprosy Istorii K.P.S.S.,* No. 1, 1957.

[26] *Voprosy Istorii,* No. 9, 1956.

[27] No. 15, 1957.

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Burdzhalov's attempt at a conscientious analysis has now been branded as 'unscholarly,' 'objectivist' and 'harmful.'[28] A comparison of the evidence adduced by both protagonists leaves no doubt that Burdzhalov is right and his analysis of the situation before Lenin's arrival correct. The information produced by Stasova, Sverdlova and Drabkina also strongly supports his view.

I. G. Dykov's article gives a good account, partly based on unpublished sources, of the activities of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee. Its main defect is the failure to record Trotsky's part in the work of the Committee; Trotsky's name is altogether absent from the article. The author also fails to substantiate his contention, taken over from Stalinist historiography, that the so-called 'Party Centre' of five was the 'leading core' of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

Apart from these, only two articles are worth mentioning. 'The Creation of the Mass Bolshevik Press in 1917' by Kh. M. Astrakhan and I. S. Sazonov[29] contains interesting new information on the subject and a clumsy attempt to refute G. Katkov's documentary evidence[30] of German financial aid to the Bolsheviks. 'V. I. Lenin in the Last Underground,' by P. N. Mikhrin,[31] is the most detailed survey of Lenin's movements in July, 1917, and of circumstances connected with his hiding; its only fault (apart of course, from the reasons given for the Government's action against Lenin) is the failure to mention Zinoviev. Another piece of research that deserves attention are the footnotes to the above-mentioned publication of the addresses of local party organisations. In these footnotes some information is given about the organisations themselves, including their size.

Taken together, recent publications enable an intelligent reader to reconstruct with a considerable degree of correctness and clarity the activities of the Bolsheviks in 1917 except those of four people—Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev. While in Stalin's time Trotsky's part was appropriated by Stalin, it is now allocated to Lenin, who thus plays an inflated leading rôle; Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, on the contrary, appear only when they can be credited with mistakes. This will probably not escape the notice of a careful reader. Such a reader, too, would be likely to perceive that the picture which emerges of the events of 1917 differs in some respects from the present official propaganda line. And there are many intelligent and careful readers among Russian students now.

[28] *Voprosy Istorii*, No. 3, 1957.

[29] *Ibid.*, No. 1, 1957.

[30] *International Affairs*, London, April, 1956.

[31] *Voprosy Istorii*, No. 4, 1957.

FORTY YEARS OF SOVIET LEGAL THINKING

The Law of Economic Administration[1] *v. Civil (Private) Law*

by S. Dobrin

THE problem is by no means new in the U.S.S.R. In 1931 a special Law of Economics Section was organised within the Law Institute of the Communist Academy, and under its auspices there appeared in 1935 a two-volume Treatise on Soviet Law of Economics. But in 1937 the Law Institute was declared a den of iniquity, the theories which it sponsored anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist, its members—wreckers, enemies of the people, traitors, and at least one of them, their acknowledged leader, Pashukanis, a downright spy. One of the accusations against them was their wish to replace the study of civil law in the U.S.S.R. by the study of the law of economics. After that no one doubted that what the U.S.S.R. needed was civil (private) law, and not the law of economics. But recently the controversy has been reopened, and it is likely to become the focus of legal discussions for the immediate future.

The question is rather urgent. Before it is answered no progress can be made in the matter of legal codification, considered in the U.S.S.R. as much overdue in any case. The Civil Codes at present in operation in the various Union Republics all date from the N.E.P. period (they are substantially identical), have all become obsolete, and would on any view require a

[1] The term in Russian is *Khoziaistvennoe Pravo*, which has no adequate equivalent in English. For the sake of brevity the phrase 'law of economics' has been used in the text.

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capital reconstruction. But now there has appeared the preliminary question: Under what dominant idea should the reconstruction take place; under that of civil (private) law or under that of the law of economics? The position is delicate: how very delicate may become clearer as the discussion proceeds—if it does proceed. It may lead to questions which even now cannot yet be frankly discussed in the U.S.S.R.

The point is that in the 1937 tragedy neither side was quite sincere and outspoken. At first sight it may seem difficult to understand what so much displeased 'the Party and the Government' in the views of the adherents of the law of economics—or whence had come to them (the Party and the Government) their sudden devotion to civil law. Starting with the definition of Soviet law in general as 'a special form of proletarian policy,' the authors of the 1935 Treatise suggested the following definition for the Soviet law of economics: 'a special (specific) form of the policy of the proletarian state in the matter of the organisation of socialist production and Soviet trade.' As will be shown later on, on every other topical point they showed the greatest eagerness to comply and to conform. Through what, then, could they have incurred in 1937 such frightening accusations as wrecking, treason, spying, and many others?

The answer must be sought in the first instance in their past—a past which they shared with the whole régime, but for which in 1937 the Party and the Government chose to make them the scapegoats. That common past was the profession of the belief that socialism and law were incompatible: Either socialism or law! However, for a proper understanding of the background of the 1937 tragedy—and of the possible complications to which the idea of law of economics may still lead in the future—it is essential to realise that those who seemed united in their belief in the incompatibility of law with socialism were not at all united in their arguments. That common belief was argued under two theories in every other respect almost poles apart. We shall call one the class theory, the other—the trading theory. The class theory, although acknowledged by every responsible Soviet spokesman, had its greatest currency amongst the rank and file in the party, those who had started their intellectual life in the party propaganda cells. The trading theory was mainly the province of lawyers who had received their training in pre-revolutionary days, but who had joined the revolution and tried to serve it to the best of their ability; it was they who provided the future victims of the tragedy of 1937. However, it also made some appeal to many professional revolutionaries, especially those with some legal training, including Lenin himself.

The class theory, when carried to its logical conclusion, as it very often was, amounted to a denial that law, or a government based on law, had ever existed, or would, or could exist. There would be no law under socialism, because there was and could be no such thing under any régime. The first proposition of the class theory was that the organisation called the State had appeared only with the division of society into classes and had always been a dictatorship, and an arena of fierce class struggle, with merciless exploitation on the one hand and desperate revolts on the other; a state of things based on 'violence, unlimited violence, and not on any law' (Lenin's standard definition of dictatorship). This proposition ruled out law in every State that had ever existed or would exist, the Soviet State not excepted. The second proposition of the class theory was that the classless society of the future, free as it would be from social conflicts, would again be a stateless society, a free society without organised compulsion, and therefore without law. Between them, State violence and stateless freedom seemed to rule out law, or government based on law, for all time. The class theory refused to recognise the reality of law any more than the reality of God.

Actually, as every adherent of the class theory well knew, the position was not so simple, even in the first years of the régime, under Lenin's own rule. From the first day of its existence, Lenin's government legislated on a very large scale. The official Collection of Laws and Ordinances issued under the old régime continued to be published. By 1929, Soviet legislation had become so bulky (and so confused) that M. Stuchka, a pre-revolutionary lawyer and bolshevik and a high legal dignitary under the Soviets, felt compelled to complain: 'Did we not burn our old laws

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in 1917? Yet, the number of post-revolutionary laws alone exceeds the number which Germany has accumulated throughout her history. Such is the irony of fate! At the time when we hailed dictatorship as a force above law, did we for a moment imagine that one day we should be groaning under the burden of our own laws?' M. Stuchka's lamentations are themselves evidence of his and his comrades original hopes that the destruction of bourgeois rule would automatically bring about the destruction of the bourgeois myth of law. Out of the two conflicting tendencies, the denial of law on the one hand, and the impossibility of getting on without law on the other, there arose in Soviet Russia the concept of the 'revolutionary rule of law,' or 'revolutionary legality'—of law which was sometimes treated as law, but more often as no law at all. Thus the denial of law by the class theory, although at no time completely effective, not even in the first years of the régime, was nevertheless a real force in the actual building up and administration of the new State. As late as 1930, a very high Soviet statesman (the recently demoted L. Kaganovich) severely scolded a Communist professor of law for writing a book representing the U.S.S.R. as a State based on law.

The arguments used by the old lawyers who joined the revolution in discussing the incompatibility of socialism with law were very different. The clearest exposition of their views—what is called here the trading theory—is given in a little book by their leader Pashukanis, the first edition of which, under the title 'General Theory of Law and Marxism,' appeared (under the auspices of the Communist Academy) in 1924. With appropriate quotations from Marx and Engels, he boldly disagreed with the proposition that law nowhere and never was a reality. He went even further. Contrary to the standard Communist view on law as an instrument of class domination and subjugation, he declared the real function of law to be the regulation of dealings between equals: equals with conflicting interests. There is room for law, indeed, law is indispensable, wherever there are dealings between parties which are equal to each other, are independent of each other and whose interests are conflicting. In a bourgeois society there are such dealings and such parties: the dealings between traders exchanging their goods on the free market. A bourgeois society therefore needs law: private law. On the other hand, under socialism the whole national economy would become the business of one person—of the state which, for running it, would have as little need of law as any private person has for running his own private affairs for so long as he can abstain from dealings with other persons. The State as the sole owner of all trade and industries would have neither the need nor the opportunity for entering into private law dealings with other persons. *Ergo*, a socialist state would not need private law. This was the first link in the argument.

There then followed the second, and concluding, link. In what is now known as criminal, administrative or constitutional law, the parties are the State on the one hand and individuals on the other, two parties admittedly unequal with each other. At the basis of their relationship is not equality, but authority on one side and submission on the other. In addition, the idea underlying their relationship is that their interests coincide, and are not conflicting. In other words, the relationship between the State and the individual is lacking in both the elements which make law possible and necessary: equality and conflicting interests. It is only in a bourgeois society, with its basis in real law (private law), that the rules governing the relations between the State and the individual can be kept on some kind of legal footing. When, for instance, in a bourgeois court of law the Crown and the prisoner bargain, apparently on the basis of equality, about the price which the prisoner is to pay for his act, that is only a reflection, in the relations between the State and the individual, of the position in their society of two traders exchanging their goods on the market. In a socialist State which has finished with private traders, criminals would be dealt with by doctors, perhaps by jailers, but not by lawyers on the basis of some formal quasi-legal rules. A socialist society would be run by its leaders, or members, as science and expediency might require, in the same way as a hospital is run by its doctors or a factory by its engineers. The rules operating in a socialist society would be technical, not

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legal, rules (remember Engels' famous saying about the replacement, under socialism, of the government of men by the administration of things), and would be based on expediency and not on 'rights.' The class theory contrasted dictatorship (violence) in a State, any State, with 'full democracy' (freedom) in a stateless society. The trading theory contrasted a State based on law (in a community based on trade) with a State where expediency and discretion are the only guiding principles of government (a socialist State). Those in the West who argue against socialism, reasoning that it is incompatible with the rule of law, would find powerful support in the Soviet trading theory. For a good many years the trading theory altogether swayed Soviet jurisprudence—a fact all the implications of which cannot be considered here. But it may be opportune to state one of the reasons which made this fact possible.

The main practical value of the class theory to the Soviet Government was that it released it from the fetters which the rule of law might have imposed on its activities. Useful as law may be to a ruler as an instrument of government, it is also a restriction on him, even when reduced to its bare minimum: the duty of the ruler to deal with particular cases in accordance with the law as laid down by himself, with the corresponding right of the subject to be treated in accordance with the law, or to rely on the law, as laid down by the ruler. The class theory, by its denial of law under any government, absolved the Soviet Government from the duty of ruling by the machinery of law, even its own law. It amounted to a licence to the agents of the government to deal with every case on its merits, as they saw them, guided only by considerations of expediency. Now, the trading theory offered the Government and its agents the same advantage, although in a more subtle form. The adherents of the trading theory were far from demanding the preservation of an economy based on the free exchange of commodities in the interests of the rule of law; on the contrary, they were in full agreement, so they proclaimed, with the policy of socialism pursued by the government. Simultaneously they argued that as the new State became more and more socialist, its need of law would decrease. For the time being, their arguments served the needs of the government as well as did those of the class theory with its denial of law for all time. Moreover, from the point of view of the government, the trading theory had this advantage over the class theory: that, being more flexible, it allowed them to alternate at will between completely absolving their agents from legal restraints (in the name of socialism, during periods of active socialisation) and impressing on them the importance of greater legality (during the N.E.P. period, for instance, on behalf of the then revived, or still surviving, trading relations).

It all looked well and safe until about the end of 1930, when, however, clouds started gathering round the prophets of stateless socialism in both their varieties, but especially round the protagonists of the trading theory. The introduction of the First Five Year Plan was heralded as a decisive move towards integral socialism and, at least, as the beginning of the end of the N.E.P. According to the class theory, it was then time to begin to think of dissolving the Soviet state organisation in favour of stateless freedom. According to the trading theory, it was time for the Government to realise that all their Acts, Decrees, Rules and Regulations were not law, but rules of expediency, without the prestige which mankind had for centuries become accustomed to associate with law. But the Government was not ready for either step. Its programme aimed at strengthening, not dissolving, the state organisation. And as for the choice between law and expediency, the Government was only then beginning to enjoy to the full the sensation of having not merely force on their side, but the Law as well. Lenin might as late as 1920 still be satisfied with the view of his own State as 'an instrument of the proletariat in its class struggle. A special kind of club, *rien de plus*.' In the thirties the Party and the Government began to make higher claims. A new demand for law had come from a source from which the trading theory could not possibly have expected it: from the Five Year Plans. Under the trading theory, the date of the introduction or, at the latest, the date of completion, of the First Five Year Plan was to be the Appointed Day for the end of Law. With the completion of the Five Year Plan there was

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to be an end to private enterprise in the U.S.S.R., and Soviet economy was to become completely socialist; and with the establishment of socialism there was bound to be an end to law in the U.S.S.R. But actually it had all worked out in such a way that, when planning began in earnest, the Government seemed to have found a new and very useful application for law: to serve planning. The marxist view on law as the superstructure over economics is well known. In that view, the possibilities of law are limited; substantially, law can only record in its language the order of things dictated by the interests of the development of the productive forces. But with the transition to intensive planning, the contention was raised in influential quarters in the U.S.S.R. that any such limitations on law could have no application under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat was declared to be able not merely to keep pace with the development of the productive forces but to direct and, if necessary, to change their course; and law was to be its instrument for that purpose.

Sensing the gathering storm the protagonists of the trading theory started beating a retreat. Step by step they gave up every point peculiar to their theory. In the Treatise they fully accepted the possibility and necessity of law under socialism. The Plan, under their theory the very opposite of law, they obediently declared to be the sacred law of the land, the fulfilment of which would be the first legal duty of every good Soviet citizen. They proved themselves second to none in their recognition of the supremacy of the Party, of its rôle as the all over-riding, all over-reaching source of law in the U.S.S.R. Voluntarily, they undertook the defence of the ruling group of the Party against accusations by certain elements within the Party itself of having started the 'liquidation of the kulaks as a class' without any justification whatever in the law, indeed in flagrant violation of the law as it then existed (the Decree sanctioning the liquidation, a document of a few lines, appeared only in February, 1930, after much of the work had already been done). They based their defence on Lenin's definition of dictatorship as violence not restricted by any law. But it all proved of no avail. On the occasion of the 1936 Constitution the official view became that nowhere could law have better conditions than under Soviet socialism; and scapegoats were necessary to atone for the past intemperate exaggerations. Once the storm had broken its main weight naturally fell on the protagonists of the trading theory. The adherents of the class theory were the creators and the creatures of the régime, and there was in 1937 hardly a man prominent in Soviet politics who had not at one time or another indulged in prophecies about the disappearance of State and law with the disappearance of classes. The doctrine had been given constitutional validity by article 9 of the R.S.F.S.R. Constitution of July, 1918, which read as follows: 'The principal object of the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R., a Constitution designed to serve the present period of transition, consists in the establishment, in the form of a strong All-Russian Soviet Authority, of the dictatorship of the urban and rural workers together with the poorest of the peasants, to secure the complete suppression of the bourgeoisie, the abolition of the exploitation of man by man, and the effectuation of socialism under which neither class divisions nor State authority will any longer exist.' Lenin most certainly predicted in 1917 that the withering away of the State would begin immediately with the dictatorship of the proletariat, and would be completed with the disappearance of classes. But in the cold light of 1937 the trading theory must have appeared to those responsible for the régime as a kind of gratuitous scandal, almost a conspiracy, to bring the régime into ridicule and contempt.

However, the fact is that having decided to mend their ways and to stop doubting the possibility of law under socialism, the ex-protagonists of the trading theory turned their attention to the law of economics. And there is the other fact that amongst the sins officially imputed to them in 1937 was not merely their past legal scepticism but also their choice of the law of economics as the subject-matter for their study, instead of civil (private) law. It is not impossible that for its authors the Treatise on Law of Economics still offered a means of asserting themselves, of salvaging something from their old beliefs: the law of economics, and not civil law under socialism. From their

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definition it can be seen that the law of economics was conceived by them as chiefly administrative law, a study of the *organisation* of socialist trade and production, in other words, of the administrative mechanism by which the Party and the Government run the Soviet national economy. After all, they had always admitted that some regulation might be necessary even under socialism, but only technical, not legal. And now they agreed to treat administrative law as law. However, for the Party and the Government their new conversion to law might have seemed worse than their original legal scepticism—precisely because of their choice of the organisation of production and trade as the subject-matter for their studies. The administrative organisation of the Soviet economy may be the sphere into which the Party and the Government may be least willing to allow legal analysis to penetrate —and which indeed may prove least suitable for legal analysis. Unlike the administration of justice, for instance, the running of the national economy is still even now the direct concern of the Party and the Government. Much is done through the local Party Committees, and it is to be remembered that the inner working of the Party is admittedly not a matter for legal interpretation. The relations within the Party, including the relations between the Party and its members in the Government, are not legal relations, and, moreover, are not open to outside curiosity. Much in the matter of the national economy is done by the Party and the Government by particular orders, from case to case, strictly on the lines Head Office—Local Branches. Naturally, such orders are never published; they remain in the files of the departments and other offices to which they are directed. But even for their ordinances of a more general character promulgation is not considered essential. 'In a State aiming at the direct regulation of the national economy,' wrote a Soviet lawyer in 1924, correctly reproducing what then, and for years after, was the prevailing official attitude, 'the material difference between a law and an ordinance tends to disappear . . . laws more and more turn out to be rules for the internal running of a gigantic undertaking . . . regarding them the demand of promulgation as a *conditio sine qua non* becomes meaningless.' For all the changes that have taken place since then in the attitude to law in the U.S.S.R. this statement is still true regarding the instruments by which the Party and the Government run the Soviet national economy. Indeed, under the 1936 Constitution the point that promulgation by publication is not essential for such instruments (ordinances, resolutions) has gained in clearness. Unlike the position before that, under the 1936 Constitution only the Supreme Soviet can pass laws, and the place for laws has become the Bulletins of the Supreme Soviet, which have replaced the Collection of Laws and Ordinances taken over by Lenin from the old régime. The ordinances of the Party and the Government are technically not laws, and are not published in the Bulletins of the Supreme Soviet. For them one must search in all sorts of sources (the daily press, departmental periodicals, etc.), and sometimes one's searches may be in vain. Copies of them may be conveyed to all the agents of the Party and the Government who may have to administer them, and that may be considered enough. In importance ordinances of the Party and the Government may by far exceed the various laws that bear the stamp of the Supreme Soviet and are published in its Bulletins. For instance, on March 6, 1956, the Party and the Government resolved on two measures. One was that the size of the plot which a kolkhoz household may have for their private use should in the future depend on the number of working days which all the inmates forming the household have together earned during the year. The other allowed the Board of a kolkhoz to distribute a certain percentage of the proceeds from their sales to the State among members by way of advances before the end of the operative year. The vital importance of these two measures for millions of people is evident. But they were not measures taken through the Supreme Soviet, and have not been published in its Bulletins. If nevertheless they are binding on everybody in the U.S.S.R. this can only be for the reason, and in conformity with the general idea, that they are measures for, and in the course of, the proper running of the national economy of which the Party and the Government are the ultimate managers. What is true regarding the collective farms which,

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under the Constitution, are only socialist but not State undertakings, must *a fortiori* be true regarding the branches of national economy which are fully State-owned.

In fact not much law had been discovered by the Treatise of 1935 in the mechanism by which the Party and the Government run the national economy. To the extent that it tried to come to grips with that mechanism, it proved chiefly descriptive, as might any piece of research into the organisation of any big capitalist undertaking. Moreover, because of the constant changes in that mechanism, the Treatise proved in parts out of date even before its appearance in print. In a paper read in 1933 under the title 'A Law of Economics Code for the U.S.S.R.,' one of the future editors of the Treatise noted the following 'characteristic features of recent Soviet economic legislation. In the first instance, there is its operative and concrete character. Such laws as the Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars and of the Central Committee of the Party "concerning measures for the organisation of spring sowing in the Northern Caucasus" of January 1, 1933, or "concerning the repair of tractors and the spring sowing campaign" of January 19, 1933, are typical for the recent period. . . . Both Acts contain scarcely any general norms. . . . The terms of the 1931-33 laws appear to overlook the fact that they were not starting with a clean slate but were to replace some other laws previously issued and often not yet formally repealed . . . they ignore the old laws, find it unnecessary to mention which portions of them they abrogate, and which they amend or supplement.' On such a basis it was hardly possible to build up a Treatise on the Soviet Law of Economics. Hence, perhaps, the suggestion of the Party and the Government to Soviet lawyers that it might be better for them to concentrate on private law, instead of the law of economics. But to make the point clear, it is essential to explain how there can be private law in the U.S.S.R.

It is reliably related that at a conference of Soviet lawyers in 1920 someone raised the question whether it might not be advisable to attempt some codification of private law as it then operated in Soviet Russia, but soon realised that there was then only one private law contract likely to survive for some time: the contract between a village commune and the village shepherd. Under the N.E.P. it was different, and the present Republican Civil Codes all date from the N.E.P. period. But officially the N.E.P. had ended long ago, not later than the end of the First Five-Year Plan, and with the end of the N.E.P. even the contract between the village commune and the village shepherd had gone: the commune turned into a kolkhoz and the village shepherd into a kolkhoznik, with all the rights and duties of kolkhoz membership. That being so, it might be asked, where in the U.S.S.R. could the material for Civil Law or a Civil Code come from?

The answer is that it is not true that the N.E.P. had ever been completely abolished. The N.E.P. consisted of two parts: (i) concessions to private enterprise which had indeed been taken away later on; (ii) changes in the method of running the nationalised industries as well as in the means by which the State tried to maintain its workers—changes which, although modified in many respects, are still in operation:

(a) The most important survival of the N.E.P. in the Soviet economy today is money: Soviet economy is still an economy based on money. During the last stages of the War Communism period the régime was definitely moving towards the complete abolition of money. The N.E.P. meant a return to an economy based on money. Naturally, when discussions started about the complete abolition of the N.E.P. it was accepted as self-understood that such abolition would bring about the abolition of money. But in fact money had not been abolished even after the official abolition of the N.E.P., and, instead, attempts were made to erase every trace of the original admission that without the abolition of money there could be no complete abolition of the N.E.P. (or that socialism and money were incompatible). Compare the following two versions of a portion of Stalin's speech at the XVIth Party Congress on June 27, 1930, one on p. 37 of the verbatim report published in the same year, and the other in v. 12 of Stalin's Collected Works, published in 1949, p. 307:

1. 'Whilst taking the offensive over the whole front, we are still not yet abolishing the N.E.P., since private trade and capitalist elements still

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remain, commodity exchange and a money economy still remain. . . .'

2. 'Whilst taking the offensive over the whole front, we are still not yet abolishing the N.E.P., since private trade and capitalist elements still remain, "free" commodity exchange still remains. . . .'

The reference in the actual speech of 1930 to the abolition of money as an indispensable element in the abolition of the N.E.P. has been erased from the speech as published in 1949.

(b) Under War Communism the tendency was to replace wages and salaries by maintenance in kind. Under the N.E.P. there was a complete return to money wages, and in this respect as well there was no abolition of the N.E.P.

(c) In March, 1919, all accounts between the various nationalised undertakings were ordered to be closed, and an attempt was made to run all of them as a single concern. Under the N.E.P. the nationalised industries were divided into a number of separate corporations (state economic organisations, in Soviet terminology), each with its own profit and loss account, each dealing with all other such corporations and with the outside world in general more or less as private persons do under capitalism, *i.e.*, paying (in money) for what they get and charging for what they deliver. That method of running the State industries is still in operation to some extent.

(d) Inheritance, abolished, as an institution, in 1918, and restored under the N.E.P., has been preserved, and even enlarged, since the N.E.P.

(e) As under the N.E.P., private individuals may still own 'personal' property: furniture, clothing, books, other personal belongings, including an unlimited amount of money.

(f) The Collective Farms, although socialist undertakings, are not State undertakings, and their working can give rise to various dealings more or less of the private law type.

Thus there may be enough material for civil law, and a Civil Law Code, in the U.S.S.R.

There is however the question of proportions, or of what specific gravity is to be given to various aspects in the Soviet national economy. In a country of private enterprise, a private law Code covers the most important part of the mechanism by which the national economy is run. In the U.S.S.R. private law can affect only the fringes. The individual is admittedly kept in the position of a consumer, the property which he may own is only personal property, or consumer's goods; the money, and, generally, the property which he may own, he must not turn into capital by using it for organising a businesss of his own although he may invest his money in interest-bearing state loans. And too much importance must not be given to the contractual dealings *inter se* of the various Soviet State Economic Organisations. Soviet economy is sometimes called state capitalism, but the idea is wrong. There can be no state capitalism in a country where there is no private capitalism. It is not their relative independence *vis-à-vis* the government that makes the British Public Boards capitalist undertakings, but the fact that they have to operate surrounded by real (private) capitalism. It is their capitalist surroundings that keep them straight as capitalist undertakings, and at once compel and allow them to play capitalism in earnest. The Soviet State Economic Organisations never enjoyed anything like the independence *vis-à-vis* the government of the British Public Boards, and even that measure of independence which had been originally granted them in the early stages of the N.E.P. had in the course of years withered to such an extent that, phraseology apart, they have by now, in fact and in law, become mere subordinate agencies of the controlling and regulating Ministries and other Boards. Their production programmes are dictated to them, and so are their contracts: with whom to contract and on what main conditions. Not rarely their contracts are replaced by direct orders from above to both sides.

It may therefore seem natural to conclude that if, for its running, Soviet economy admits and needs law, this must show itself not on its fringes, but at its heart: in its administrative organisation. From this point of view, the idea that under socialism civil law must turn out to be the law of economics, may seem sound. But both historically and logically, on Soviet soil, the idea of a Law of Economics Code instead of a Civil Law Code is connected with the discarded, and even proscribed, doctrine of the incompatibility of law with socialism, and it is this that makes the position rather delicate. What if renewed research leads again to

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the old doubts: does the administrative organisation of the Soviet economy really need or admit law? And if not, can the rule of law in the U.S.S.R. have a firm basis in any other sphere of national life?

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ECONOMIC IDEAS

by A. Nove

THERE were a number of reasons why the intellectual frost of the Stalin epoch should have been particularly harmful to the development of economic thought. In the first place, 'political economy' is an essential part of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, and so a careless or unorthodox word was always liable to bring a pack of indignant philosophers baying for the speaker's blood. Secondly, the Stalin period was one in which the primacy of political over economic considerations, in the carrying out of economic policy, was particularly marked. Any independent analysis of the facts was therefore liable to bring the economist into inconvenient—not to say dangerous—proximity to the kind of policy questions which were the monopoly of the top party leadership. The leadership, in its turn, was not moved by considerations of economic rationality, as these are normally understood by economists. This was a period of ultra-rapid industrialisation, of crash programmes and campaigns, designed to achieve politically-determined objectives regardless of cost. In such an atmosphere, criteria of profitability and rationality were likely to be given a low priority in decision-making. The most obvious example is agriculture: it was party policy to enforce collectivisation, wring the State's share of the product out of the farms at the lowest possible price, shift the necessary number of peasants to the towns to expand industry. The efficiency of agriculture as such was not seriously considered, and the concept of cost-of-production was held to be irrelevant to collective farming. Much that was done in the period of forced industrialisation was uneconomic by normal standards. Some may argue that it had to be so. In any case, it *was* so, and this helps to explain the relatively limited attention devoted to economic theory. There was, in fact, no general text-book of economics published at all between 1928 and 1954.

After the mid-thirties, the publication of statistical data was increasingly restricted. This was a logical corollary to the refusal of the Soviet State to countenance any discussion of its economic policies; it deprived the citizen of the information necessary for independent judgment. The Western student of Soviet affairs suffered much from this situation, but Soviet economists suffered even more. Not only were they severely handicapped by lack of figures—the essential raw material of their trade—but they were not allowed to draw any but officially authorised conclusions from the few that were published.

Nor were they able to devote their analytic talents to the study of the capitalist world, since such study was closely integrated with the needs of political warfare. Thus when party policy was based—as it generally was—on the imminence of a deepening crisis of capitalism, published work on the west had to illustrate this proposition. Western economists had to be denounced as hirelings and stooges. A more enlightened attitude in the first years after the war was brought to an end in 1947, with the dissolution of Varga's Institute of World Economics.

It is remarkable that twenty-five years of fully-fledged Soviet planning should have passed without the appearance of a single theoretical contribution worthy of note. There was some talk in the highest circles about the need to fill this gap; thus Stalin was involved in 1941 in a discussion about the outline of an economics text-book, but it was not until 1951 that senior economists were set to work to write a systematic and authoritative text-book. Stalin made several personal contributions to the discussion, and these were published in 1952 under the title of *Economic Problems of Socialism*. In particular, he developed a slightly new approach to the theory of value, which is relevant to the more recent debates and to which some space must now be devoted.

Stalin criticised those who were in the habit of asserting that the Soviet State could disregard the law of value, or 'transform' that law to suit itself. Economic laws, he argued, retain their validity in the Soviet Union. However, while

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thus appearing to legitimise the law of value, he confined its operation to those sectors of the economy not wholly under control. For example, it mattered greatly what price was paid for cotton, because cotton was grown on collective farms, which would grow less of it if too low a price were offered. Similarly, retail prices mattered, because the citizens exercised choice as to what and whether to buy. However, interchanges *within* the State sector involved no change of ownership and were wholly subject to the plan; thus nearly all producers' goods (coal, steel, machinery, etc.) were merely transferred from one State enterprise to another, and not really sold at all, and so values and prices were involved only as a convenient check on the operations of the enterprises. When Stalin spoke of the 'law of value,' he meant the power of economic forces, or, in political terms, deference to the considerations of economic rationality. In practice, it meant that the prices of potatoes matter, because they affect the behaviour of producers and consumers, so that wrong decisions about prices lead to trouble. On the other hand, the prices of lorries and machine tools do *not* matter in this sense, since here both the producers and the users are State institutions, and the decisions of the State planning authorities *replace* economic forces.

Needless to say, Stalin's words were hailed as the ultimate in wisdom. Shortly afterwards he died, but the work on the text-book continued. The draft was submitted to the Central Committee of the party for approval. Finally, the work appeared in the autumn of 1954, very much in the form Stalin would have wished, since it incorporated everything that had been suggested in his *Economic Problems of Socialism*. The text-book has been the subject of much comment, to which it seems unnecessary to add anything here. It might be described as the *apogee* of mental bankruptcy. Virtually every real problem is evaded. Fortunately, Soviet economists no longer regard this work as authoritative. The fact that it has recently been published in England in translation, under Communist auspices, says much for the incorrigible stupidity of the British Communists.

The post-Stalin thaw was slow to reach economics. There was, indeed, some attempt by certain younger economists to find a theoretical basis for Malenkov's 'consumer-goods' policy; however, their arguments were on so low a theoretical level that it was easy to brush them aside (as the work of 'woebegone economists') when Malenkov fell. This checked temporarily the development of economic thought, possibly by underlining its too intimate connection with current politics. A second edition of the text-book, published in 1955, showed no fundamental change; there were a number of minor reformulations, and the more extreme attacks on the West were somewhat toned down. Perhaps the most significant novelty was the definition of the 'main task' of Soviet economic policy: to overtake the most advanced countries of the West at the earliest moment. In a sense this was no more than a reformulation of a slogan common in the thirties, which had been dropped in the late-Stalin era because it conflicted with the myth of all-round Soviet superiority. In the new situation this slogan was to acquire significance in connection with the awakening of economic theory from its long sleep.

The first really vigorous effort to revive economics came in September, 1955, in an article in *Voprosy Ekonomiki* by Professor Dyachenko, newly-appointed head of the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences. He criticised most forthrightly the shortcomings of his profession: there had been no original theoretical work for many years; hardly anything useful had been written on matters of practical significance, such as price policy; nothing was being done to study or develop Marx's economic theories; research on the capitalist world was on a very low and crude level; economists tended merely to cite the sayings of the authorities, illustrating these sayings, and current party policy, with selected facts; their work was dominated by quotations, with or without quotation marks. Dyachenko thus publicly exposed the intellectual sterility of Soviet economists.

His attack must certainly have been part of an officially inspired campaign. A number of criticisms of a similar nature appeared in the party press, and at the 20th Congress of the Party, held in February, 1956, Mikoyan pointed out that 'in dealing with contemporary capitalism, we do not undertake profound study

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of facts and figures, but frequently confine ourselves to seizing upon isolated facts about the coming crisis or the impoverishment of the masses for propaganda purposes.' He contrasted the work being done on the Soviet economy in America with the inadequacy of such work in Russia itself. One reason for this, as he rightly pointed out, was the lack of published statistics; 'economists are deprived of the possibility of processing them and so are condemned to the rôle of quotation-mongering and the repetition of old formulæ and out-of-date figures.' Mikoyan also said that the ideas expressed in Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism* stood in need of revision, though he did not specify in what respect. Soon after the Congress, the amount of statistical information published in the U.S.S.R. began rapidly to increase. In June, 1956, there appeared the first general digest of statistics for almost twenty years. This was followed by volumes on industry, internal trade, culture, transport, separate digests on major republics, and others are said to be yet to come. Long-suppressed data have appeared on a variety of topics, from population to prices, from housing to industrial location. Although some serious gaps remain—notably foreign trade, wages, harvests—both the Soviet and the Western observers of the economy are now in a much more satisfactory position, though certain official indices continue to demand care and, not infrequently, a dose of scepticism.

Before tracing the more recent development of economic thinking, we should ask why this change in the official attitude has come about.

In part, it has been one aspect of the gradual lessening of totalitarian pressures on thought, which has also been noticeable in other branches of intellectual life. However, the leaders' evident concern with the state of economics has a more directly practical explanation. It has already been noted that the 'main task' of Soviet economic policy is to overtake the West at the earliest date. In pursuit of this aim, the government has become acutely conscious of the problem of maximising *efficiency*. There are a number of reasons why this has become more vital than it was in Stalin's day. One is a by-product of the substantial lessening of terror. The government has been unable, even if it has wished, to devote undivided attention to maximising the growth of Soviet industrial might. The traditional priorities of Stalinism have been diluted. There are great agricultural campaigns, an accelerated housing programme, concessions to whole categories of citizens (pensioners, low-paid labourers, peasants, etc.). The laws forbidding unauthorised change of occupation have been repealed. There has been a marked decline in the prison population, which was useful in developing remote areas. There is also the burden imposed by foreign economic relations (support for flagging satellites, aid for underdeveloped countries, etc.). No doubt none of the factors listed above is, in itself, of decisive importance. However, taken together they cause strain, which becomes the more serious because the U.S.S.R. has run into a period of labour shortage. This shortage is in large part due to the effect of the abnormally low wartime birth-rate on the present intake of young workers, which is made more serious still by the extension of the period of whole-time education, the reduction of hours of labour, and increased demand for labour in agriculture. The last of these points has an importance which should not be underestimated. Ever since the start of Russia's industrial revolution, the tempo of growth has depended largely on a flow of labour from villages to towns, accompanied by a gradual decline in the numbers engaged in farming. Since 1953, however, the government's agricultural programmes have resulted in a sizeable net increase in the numbers of able-bodied peasants. Thus the pursuit of the government's economic aims encounters obstacles, there are insufficient resources to meet urgent requirements. This showed itself most clearly in December, 1956 (though the strains were apparent earlier), when the Central Committee was compelled to initiate a downward revision of the rate of growth prescribed in the Sixth Five-Year Plan. This is the background to the controversy about the reorganisation of industrial administration and planning. It also underlies the much greater interest now being shown in achieving the most economically effective disposition of limited resources. Economists have therefore been called upon to contribute their ideas. In the words of Strumilin, 'in our day [*sic*], the collec-

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tive wisdom of the economists must not sleep.'[1]

A small but significant illustration of the effect of the shortage of resources on Soviet economic theory concerns the concept of obsolescence. Until 1955, Soviet economists liked to point out that in capitalist countries a machine is often scrapped because it is obsolete, well before the end of its physical life, and they cited this as an example of wicked capitalist waste. Obsolescence, so it was claimed, was not a category known to socialism. In 1955, it was realised that this argument was nonsensical, and Strumilin had the honesty to explain why. *Any* machine may be worth using when there is an abundance of labour, but it may be wasteful to use labour on obsolete machines once it becomes more scarce.[2] Consequently, Soviet economists are now at work devising a theory of obsolescence. This is one minor example of the way in which practical problems compel attention to long-neglected aspects of economics. It is typical of the state of the profession, and of Soviet intellectual life as a whole, that this question had to be raised publicly by a leading politician, Bulganin, before it could receive proper attention in the specialised press.

During 1956 professional standards showed a gradual improvement. The 'flavour' of articles in economics periodicals was changing. The dreary repetition of orthodox formulæ became rarer. Some original research saw the light of day, including articles truthfully setting out many unsettled problems in agriculture, and there was even a solid 700-page analysis of the economics of collective farms, with a number of independent ideas.[3] Various specialists began to query certain accepted concepts and methodologies: *e.g.*, the methods of calculating labour productivity or gross industrial output, the definition of national income or the nature of turnover tax. Pertinent questions began to be asked about the illogicalities of the price structure. Another sign of health was the beginning of genuine controversies among economists, conducted by reference to facts and real problems and not to the writings of Marx and Lenin. For example, a vigorous debate on costs and productivity in agriculture has continued through 1956 and is still unsettled, and it has been conducted on strictly business-like lines. There was also some revival of original thought about wages and labour incentives, which, in the circumstances described, is hardly surprising. (One does not need a theory of wages if there is no freedom of movement and a large body of unfree workers.) Some economists began to make unofficial deductions from published statistics, which on occasion have led them into error—with the incidental effect of depriving Western scholars of one 'advantage' of the Stalin era: in those days, *any* figure quoted in any Soviet periodical could be regarded as quasi-official, by virtue of the fact that it appeared at all.

The Government took steps to stimulate study of the economy of Western countries. Varga's institute was revived, with old Varga himself a prominent member. Information on Western achievements was given some publicity, and indeed the gap separating Russia from her Western rivals has been emphasised rather than hidden. The ridiculous claims that Russians had invented everything have been dropped. Yet the analysis—at any rate in published work—of the economies of Western countries remains bedevilled by dogmatic formulations about impoverishment, wicked bloodsucking monopolists and the like, while the exigencies of ideological warfare have prevented serious consideration of Western economic theory.

Indeed, the developments of 1956, while contrasting with the intellectual desert of preceding years, were still severely limited. Needless to say, no major tenets of Party policy were challenged. Nor was there any reformulation of any important theoretical principle, though some were edging towards it in their discussion of the price system. Mikoyan's invitation to revise Stalin was approached with great caution. It was not until the very end of the year that fundamental issues were broached, at what was described as 'an extended meeting of the academic council on political economy' of the Institute of Economics in Moscow. This meeting was held in December, 1956, but its proceedings were first reported at the end of March, 1957, when the February issue of

[1] *Vestnik Statistiki*, 1957, 3.

[2] *Voprosy Ekonomiki*, 1956, 6.

[3] By the economist, S. S. Sergeyev.

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Voprosy Ekonomiki saw the light of day. Not only was this issue delayed but its appearance brought news of a number of changes in the editorial board of this periodical, which suggests conflict of some kind. While it is possible that this conflict may be connected with the political troubles which were then brewing, there is no evidence upon which to establish any direct connection between the personalities involved. The link may be indirect: the policies advocated by certain economists may have been inconsistent with Khrushchev's ideas about the reorganisation of the economy. It is therefore useful to examine the present controversies, while bearing in mind that they may be incompletely reported.

For the first time in living memory Soviet economists have tackled problems of basic theoretical importance and with profound policy implications. The subject of the discussion was the law of value and price formation. To the non-specialist reader this may seem arid theory-spinning, yet it was nothing of the kind. It brought into the open a vital question: what should be the rôle of economic forces ('the law of value') in the Soviet Union? In its practical aspects the discussion concerned criteria for price fixing and the rôle of the price system. The implications, whether or not these found open expression, are far-reaching: if objective criteria of economic rationality exist, then the Government should act accordingly. If it does not, then its arbitrary actions are irrational and therefore wrong. Indeed, the apparently harmless phrase 'the law of value' implies the desirability of limiting arbitrariness in the name of rationality. On a less fundamental plane, the opening of a discussion on value and prices 'legitimised' a large number of criticisms of current policies and practices. In other words, the discussion had a much more than professional significance.

The first thing done at the meeting in December, 1956, was to remove an obstacle in the path of clear thinking: Stalin's views on the law of value were rejected. The rejection was almost unanimous and, no doubt, decided in advance. Stalin was not mentioned by name, since at the time at which the report was published it was 'fashionable' to soft-pedal criticisms of him. His formulation was solemnly referred to as 'certain ideas which had until recently a wide currency.' The main thing, however, is that the ideas were thrown overboard. It was agreed that *all* goods, including producers' goods, were subject to the 'law of value,' that harm is done if decisions are taken without reference to economic criteria. The harm, *i.e.* the waste of resources, caused by neglecting economic rationality was particularly emphasised by I. Malyshev, in an article which appeared in *Voprosy Ekonomiki* (1957, 3). He took as one of his examples the prices of machinery, where in Stalin's day (and more recently, too) it was common practice to fix an artificially low price with the object of 'stimulating mechanisation.' Such an attitude, wrote Malyshev, 'inevitably leads us into the realm of arbitrariness and subjectivism, and we become unable to judge properly whether the use of this or that machine is profitable. . . . What will happen if the price of a machine reflects, for example, only three-quarters of its value? In this case an enterprise using even a bad machine may find this profitable to itself, while the State as a whole would lose from the introduction of the machine and, most important, would not even know this. In the guise of technical progress, we may be introducing backward, imperfect machines, because it is impossible to discover whether they are economic.' Malyshev also argued in favour of using as a criterion of rationality of investment the *return on invested capital*, and consequently that profits should be calculated in relation to capital, and not, as now, as a percentage on costs. He also sought to establish a logical connection between *rationality and profitability*, a point of fundamental significance to which we will return. Other contributors to the growing discussion pointed to the waste which arises from the conflict between plan targets and the self-interest of enterprise managers. For example, enterprises which make constructional steel are interested in maximising its weight, as the plan is set in tons; toolmakers, on the other hand, seek to use the dearest possible type of steel, because their plan is expressed in rubles. Clearly, price policy and planning methods must be reformed to provide managers with rational criteria for decision.

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But how is this to be done? What should be the proper basis of price fixing? On this point a variety of opinions has been expressed. Strumilin, for example, argued as follows: according to Marxian schema, each worker engaged in material production 'creates' value in excess of the wage he receives, equal to society's accumulation plus the unproductive expenditures of the State (defence, education, etc.). Strumilin calculated that this represented roughly 75 per cent of the wages paid. He therefore defined the 'value' of each product as equal to the wages expended in its production plus a surcharge of 75 per cent. Prices should then generally equal 'value' so defined. (This somewhat unrealistic construction has been criticised by several other economists.) There have been strong views expressed—for instance by Kronrod and Kondrashev—in favour of a more equal distribution of turnover tax. At present turnover tax is levied almost wholly on consumers' goods; their prices are therefore much higher, relatively to production costs, than are those of producers' goods, such as coal, steel, and machinery. Kronrod and others agree with Strumilin that this is economically unjustified, that it causes confusion in the price system. They too would like to see a total reform of prices, though their formula is different from Strumilin's. On the other hand, certain economists take a different view. For example Professor Turetski argues against a scrapping of the existing system, and would be content with marginal adjustments only. In his opinion prices should bear a logical relationship to one another only if the goods are potentially interchangeable. Thus oil and coal—yes, but coal and a cotton dress—why? In other words, he sees nothing wrong with the present practice of levying turnover tax primarily on consumers' goods. On this, and on a number of other issues, agreement appears remote.

At this point it seems desirable to consider briefly the sort of underlying difficulties with which the Soviet economists are wrestling and the relevance of their ideas to recent changes in Soviet economic organisation.

There are two ways of looking at the problem of rationality in the context of the Soviet economy. The first is to approach it from the viewpoint of the central planning agency. The planners have constantly to make choices between alternatives. For example, they may have to decide upon a site for a steelworks, or whether or not to expand production of coal in the Moscow coalfield. In the past they were led astray through failing to take economic factors into account. For instance, steelworks have been located in Georgia and at Cherepovets (Vologda province), remote from raw material and fuel supplies, which produce at a heavy loss. Moscow coal has been made to look 'profitable' by arbitrarily reducing railway freight charges, but a disguised loss is still a loss. It is doubtless the unanimous view of Soviet economists that such stupidities as these must cease, and no party leader could argue the contrary.

However, others see the problem from the angle of the producing enterprise. They see that planners cannot possibly decide rationally between the innumerable alternatives which arise during the productive process. For example, livestock can be fed with hay, root crops, maize silage, grain, etc., etc. No one but the management of a given farm is likely to be able to decide the optimum proportions of the various kinds of fodder, or how much of each should be grown on the farm and how much brought in from outside. Yet such choices can only be made rationally if the prices of the alternative fodders bear a rational relationship to one another. This line of argument must lead to a further question. The farm is potentially capable of producing several commodities, just as most factories are able to make a variety of articles. How much choice should be given to the management as to what to produce? On what basis should such choice be exercised? We have already noted that waste is often caused by the management's endeavours to fulfil plans defined from above in quantity or monetary terms. Various suggestions have been put forward to improve the definition of plans, but all have obvious disadvantages, which other economists have not failed to point out. Then should not the management choose between alternative methods of production so as to minimise cost, and choose between alternative lines of production by direct reference to the requirements of the *user*? This brings one back to Malyshev's argument about the connection

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between rationality and profitability: if what is most needed is also most profitable, then the choice between alternatives may to a great extent be left to enterprise managers, and efficiency should be the gainer. This could be a basis of truly rational decentralisation.

However, there are several obstacles to the development of this kind of thinking. One is simply the inadequacy of Marxian economics. Marx's concept of value is derived wholly from the conditions of production. Demand is virtually ignored, except in the sense that a commodity that is not wanted at all has no utility and consequently no value. Therefore the various economists participating in the discussion have been unable to build a theoretical bridge between demand and value. In practical terms this means that if a user—be he a consumer or another factory—prefers the producer to make A rather than B, he has no means of making the production of A more profitable than B, since the prices of both are fixed centrally by reference to costs, not to demand. It is interesting to note that Soviet technicians have pointed to this weakness: managers are not materially interested in improving the quality or durability of a commodity, nor have they sufficient material stimulus to take risks, which discourages useful innovation. Economists have yet to devise a theory which can take these realities into account.

Another, and more important obstacle is less theoretical than political in nature. The idea that managers of enterprises should choose what to produce clashes with the view that *political authorities* should take economic decisions. This finds theoretical expression in the dogma—which no economist has yet openly challenged—that the 'law of value' (economic forces) does not play a regulatory rôle under socialism. The more automatism there is in the economy, the more decisions are reached at enterprise level by reference to considerations of market and rationality, the smaller are the everyday economic functions of party and government. Of course, party officials know that efficiency considerations demand that managers should have *some* autonomy; but they are apt to be unenthusiastic at an extension of managers' powers so great as to deprive them of the right to interfere; men seldom wish to do themselves out of their job. The steps taken in the spring of 1957 to reorganise industry on the basis of regional control must be seen (among other things) as an effort by officialdom to correct the inefficiencies of centralised control, by devolving powers not to managers but to party and State officials in the regions.

It must have struck Khrushchev and his colleagues that the economists' discussions did not develop in a way favourable to the reforms which he has initiated. Worse still, certain ideas bore an affinity to heresies current in Poland and Yugoslavia, where thoughts about autonomous enterprises guided by market forces are quite popular. In recent months, it appears that limits are being set to the tolerated thinking of Soviet economists, under the guise of a struggle against 'revisionism.' A number of statements on these lines were no doubt officially inspired. Thus Gatovski, the editor of *Voprosy Ekonomiki,* writing in the June number of *Kommunist,* attacked the Polish Professor Brus for allegedly supporting the 'spontaneous forces of the law of value' as against state planning. 'To bring into the socialist economy spontaneous forces which are alien to it, would mean to reject its basic principles and advantages, and in the last resort would lead to economic chaos. At the end of May, an all-union conference of economists was held. A report on this conference has not yet been published (there has been more delay in the printing of *Voprosy Ekonomiki*). While it is possible that there was some conflict connected with the elimination of the 'anti-party group' of leaders, it is more likely that the cause of the trouble was the alleged 'revisionism' of Soviet economists. This interpretation finds support in a long article by Ostrovityanov in *Kommunist* (September), in which 'certain economists' are accused of expressing views similar to those of Brus.

However, both Ostrovityanov and Gatovski were careful so to phrase their articles as not to discourage all original thought. Thus Gatovski wrote that economists must 'help in the search for the best means of utilising economic levers in the planned direction of the economy, the improvement of the wages system, economic accounting, prices, etc.' He also points out that the creation of the new regional councils calls for the

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devising of 'objective criteria of regional specialisation,' if local self-interest and empire-building are not to slow down economic growth. Khrushchev's reforms have not in any way lessened the need for the technical expertise of economists, or for the elaboration of an economic theory with a bearing on the real problems of the U.S.S.R. On the contrary, the need is greater than ever. It is true that men like Khrushchev show impatience when there is talk of economic rationality and tend to reject expert advice. The most recent example is the campaign to overtake America in meat production within four years; Khrushchev admitted publicly that his economic advisers told him that this was impossible, and every Western expert agrees with them. Yet, for reasons which have already been set out at some length, circumstances compel the government to seek ways of ensuring the most effective use of limited resources, in pursuit of its own overriding aim of maximising growth in competition with the West. Therefore, it seems likely that economists will still be encouraged to use their heads, though ideas smacking of 'revisionism' will not be tolerated.

One point of some importance seems to emerge from all this. There is a visible contradiction between the needs of efficiency and arbitrary decisions by the party and government. Many sincerely patriotic Russians believed that Stalin's crude methods achieved something—the industrialisation of backward Russia—which needed to be done; it was this feeling, and not terror alone, which helped to keep things going. These same patriotic Russians may not be in a mood to tolerate for long the kind of arbitrary interference which harms efficiency for no discernible purpose. In particular, the managerial strata may well feel that way. It seems likely that the bolder spirits among the economists will be the natural allies of such men, because economic analysis must lead them to think in terms of extending the area in which economic considerations ('the law of value') determine economic behaviour; they may well argue, with reason, that the way to efficiency lies in giving more power to the managers to respond to the stimuli of a rational price system, a conclusion from which managers are unlikely to dissent. Such views as these may well find expression in the highest party circles, whatever Khrushchev and his immediate colleagues may think. Conflicts at the political level may well result from such pressures.

CONTROLS IN LITERATURE

PART I: 1946-1954

by Max Hayward

BEFORE the October Revolution a useful, if somewhat arbitrary, distinction was made between the educated and professional class in general and the 'intelligentsia' proper which, in Lavrov's famous phrase, consisted of 'critically thinking individuals' who put service to ideas above personal comfort and advancement and who were by temperament non-conformist.

Lenin was distinctly hostile to the intelligentsia understood in this sense. His conception of the party organisation, which provoked the schism of 1903, virtually excluded those persons whose allegiance to a political or philosophical doctrine could not be unqualified. Those intellectuals who were Social Democrats naturally gravitated towards the Mensheviks, and even the small minority who professed to be Bolsheviks were anything but reliable from Lenin's point of view. 'Bolshevik' philosophers and litterateurs were inevitably affected by the revisionist ideas prevalent in Social Democrat circles and, by virtue of being intellectuals, were always prone to put 'critical thought' before 'class allegiance' and party discipline. It was the hesitations of such eminent intellectual adherents of the Bolshevik faction as Bogdanov, Lunacharski, and Gorki which prompted Lenin, long before the Revolution, to lay the foundations of cultural totalitarianism. In *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* he effectively denied the right of free speculation to party philosophers and in his article 'The Party organisation and Party Literature' (1905) he enunciated the principle of 'partiinost' in the following unequivocal terms: 'The principle of Party literature consists in the fact that not only may literature not be an instrument of gain for individuals or groups but also in that it may not be an individual matter at all. It cannot be independent of general proletarian activities. Down with non-party writers! Down with literary supermen!

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Literature must become a part of proletarian activities in general; it must become a "wheel and a screw" of the single great social-democratic mechanism which is driven by the vanguard of the whole working class. Literature must become a component part of organised, planned, unified social-democratic party work.'

Since writers, historians, etc., were essential, as, after the Revolution, bourgeois specialists were essential simply by virtue of their special knowledge and talents, Lenin's general policy towards the intellectuals was to try to 'win them over,' that is, to induce them to perform their various necessary functions in the service of and under the guidance of the Party, abandoning any claim to 'critical thought' about fundamental matters of principle which were now held to have been solved by the comprehensive Marxist-Leninist *Weltanschauung*. In a word, the old distinction between the intelligentsia and the merely educated was to be obliterated.

Lenin did not live long enough to implement his policy towards the intellectuals or to perfect the means and institutions for their liquidation as a significant group in Soviet life. The intelligentsia was decimated by emigration, starvation, Cheka terror and some—very few—of its members were 'won over'; but it was able to maintain some sort of autonomous existence, under increasingly difficult circumstances, during the first decade of the Soviet régime. Censorship and general control—then exercised through the People's Commissariat for Education—were not, in principle, different from what they were before 1905, being designed mainly to prevent obvious propaganda against the régime. Until the end of N.E.P. even non-Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik writers were enabled to reach a wide public through private or co-operative publishing firms which were not under direct Party control and, indeed, a considerable amount of scarcely veiled criticism of the régime and Party ideology was published in this manner.

During the period 1929-34 not only the economy of the country but also almost every type of social activity, including intellectual and cultural life, was brought under the control of the Party, which, violently cleansed of factions, came under the complete personal domination of Stalin shortly after the 17th Party Congress.

In the second half of the 'thirties Stalin emerged as 'the great coryphæus of science' whose interventions in the arts and science became more and more frequent, reaching a peak of arbitrary immodesty in the post-war years. Some of these interventions (in music, biology, linguistics) were open, but others were behind the scenes. It is known—and was known in literary circles at the time—that Stalin personally inspired the article in *Kultura i Zhizn* of Autumn, 1948, and the article about 'A certain group of anti-patriotic theatrical critics' (*Pravda*) which unleashed the campaign against 'homeless cosmopolitans.' This is revealed by K. Simonov in *Literaturnye Zametki* (*Novy Mir*, December, 1956).

Stalin was able to impose his will, identified with 'partiinost,' through a system of controls which was so total as to be self-defeating. As well as the theoretical basis and justification of total control he inherited from Lenin the formal censorship set up in 1922 under the name Glavlit. This is practically the only Soviet institution which has never changed its name (although it has a complicated and, at some points, obscure administrative history); nor is there any evidence that there has ever been any substantial change in the general nature and scope of its functions, which are 'the surveillance of the politico-ideological tendency of works submitted, the prevention of overt counter-revolution and agitation against the Soviet régime' and of everything which actively hinders the strengthening of and inculcation of Marxist doctrine as well as the prevention of pornography and other 'unsuitable' materials, and the protection of military and economic secrets. *Glavlit* seems to be chiefly distinguished from other censorships by its almost unbelievable cumbersomeness; its system of preliminary and subsequent control before and after printing—minutely regulated in various ministerial instructions—would appear to make it a much more formidable and foolproof instrument than Tsarist censorship. In addition to *Glavlit* a special censorship for plays, films, music, and all types of theatrical performance was established by decree in 1934. Known as *Glavrepertkom*, it was much more of a bottleneck than *Glavlit*, which has an extensive apparatus on a territorial basis and special

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plenipotentiaries attached to the major State publishing houses.

Side by side with current censorship there developed under Stalin a retrospective type of censorship which aimed at 'correcting' the political, historical and literary record in the manner of Winston Smith. Soviet citizens were effectively barred from acquainting themselves at first hand with many important aspects of political and literary history by the withdrawal from bookshops and libraries of countless works, not only of major 'enemies of the people' but also of comparatively unknown writers and publicists, whose disappearance from the scene during the recurrent purges was never recorded.

Another type of retrospective censorship which became particularly frequent after the war was the 'revision' or partial re-writing of works to make them conform to changed ideological, political or literary requirements. A number of Soviet classics such as Panferov's novel 'Bruski' about collectivisation, Sholokhov's 'Virgin Soil Upturned' on the same subject, and Gladkov's 'Cement' about reconstruction at the end of the Civil War, have been extensively revised by their authors so as to give a less 'naturalistic' picture of the events to which they relate. In some cases, *e.g.*, Fadeyev's 'Young Guard,' great publicity was given to these revisions, which were speciously compared with the careful revision of their work by pre-revolutionary writers, and allegedly demonstrated the ability and willingness of Soviet authors to benefit from 'comradely criticism' and the pointing out of their errors in the Party press. In other cases offensive matter was quietly expurgated without any publicity. For example, N. Virta's 'Solitude,' first published in 1936, which describes the Tambov peasant rising in 1922, was reissued in 1947 after all references to Tukhachevsky, who crushed the rising, had been expunged.

It need scarcely be emphasised that the system of censorship briefly described here is only the more obvious part of the machinery for controlling intellectual life. Censorship may considerably restrict and inhibit the possibility of independent intellectual and cultural activity, but it is not in itself sufficient to destroy it completely, as happened under Stalin. In this respect the general structure and climate of Soviet society after its reorganisation by violent revolution from above were far more decisive. A decree of the Central Committee in 1930 abolished all private or co-operative publishing firms and amalgamated many of the already existing ones into a 'publishing and book-production combine unique in the world.' Two years later in its famous decree 'On the reconstruction of literary-artistic organisations' the Central Committee formally disbanded all independent or semi-independent literary and artistic associations and replaced them by Party dominated and 'guided' unions, of which the Union of Soviet Writers was the prototype. Membership in these organisations was conditional on conformity to Marxist-Leninist doctrine on all cardinal political and philosophical questions, and the 'method' of Socialist Realism in literature and the Arts.

Through these measures of centralisation and the elaborate aditorial and bureaucratic checks which accompanied them it was possible not only to prevent the appearance of obviously undesirable material, but to raise totalitarian control to a higher level than in Nazi Germany, for instance, by forcing action in compliance with positive—sometimes specific, but rarely unambiguous—'ideological' requirements.

Combined with constant terror or threat of terror, the use of police spies and agents provocateurs on an unprecedented scale, the confinement of all intellectual life within the framework of Party organisation and doctrine effectively broke down solidarity and mutual trust. This was, indeed, its most important consequence. One of the avowed aims of the Soviet régime had always been to substitute unquestioning loyalty to itself for group and even family loyalties and spontaneous mutual ties of any sort. The vaunted 'kollektiv'—particularly, by its very nature, in the field we are discussing—became a conglomeration of isolated, lonely, mutually suspicious individuals whose only alternative to futile martyrdom was humiliating dissimulation. How difficult it was to wear a mask may be gauged from the long list of outwardly loyal citizens who were 'unmasked' for trifling deviations from standard formulæ. By the beginning of the last war the Soviet intelligentsia, though not, of course, intellectuals, had ceased to exist.

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The advent of the war changed this situation in rather the same way as did later Stalin's death and what happened in 1941 helps to explain developments at the present day. The essence of the change at the beginning of the war is well expressed in a recent poem by Julia Neuman who describes 1941 as a 'pure year' because 'in that year of camouflage and blackout, chicanery crumbled like plaster and we saw our neighbours without masks (*bez lichin*).'[1] This is perhaps exaggerated, but there is no doubt that the war was a release from the paralysing fear and constraint engendered by years of terror and enforced lip-service to falsehood. The over-riding emotion of patriotism, eternal questions of life and death posed in the stark conditions of total war, swept away much of the hypocrisy of peace time. In the front-line, blockaded cities, and perhaps, most of all, in occupied territory chicanery gave way to comradeship.

It is sometimes argued that the post-war intellectual purge initiated by the Central Committee's decree on the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* in 1946 was motivated by the necessity to restore morale in a desperate economic situation and conditions of worsening international relations. This may be part of the truth, but the effect if not the principal aim of these measures was to re-establish and reinforce the chief instrument of Stalinist control over the intellectuals, namely the all-pervading fear which isolated them from each other and from the public. It is striking how often the transference of loyalty from the holy triad 'Party, State, People' to the true collective of people bound by ties of personal friendship figures in the post-war denunciations of intellectual aberration: 'Obviously unsuitable works were permitted to appear in print for fear of hurting friends. Such liberalism which sacrificed the interests of the people and state . . . to friendly relations and muffled criticism led to writers losing their sense of responsibility to the people, the party, the state . . .' (Central Committee Resolution on the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*. *Pravda*, August 21, 1946). It is significant that one of the measures ordered by the Central Committee in its resolution was the appointment of a new editor-in-chief, A. M. Egolin, who remained deputy-head of *Agitprop*, for *Zvezda*. The new editor was 'to bear full responsibility for the ideological-political tendency of the journal and the works published in it.' This clause in the resolution established the post-war pattern of editorial 'responsibility.' The constant reshuffling of editorial boards was directed against 'pernicious cliquism' — *vrednaya gruppovshchina* — and developed in them a morbid fear of allowing to appear in print anything which did not seem to conform to Stalin's increasingly insane and arbitrary standards of ideological purity. It was almost impossible to please. The long list of 'ideologically unsound' and even 'politically harmful' works which were exposed in the press during the last years of Stalin's life illustrates the whimsicality of his demands. Little wonder that extreme editorial timidity became a major bugbear for writers in all fields.

The most important change which has taken place in the last four years is the gradual lessening of fear and mutual distrust as the dominant features of social relations. The basic structure of society and the machinery of control have changed comparatively little, but developments in intellectual and cultural life have shown that without terror they are less and less effective as a means of ensuring intellectual conformity. An equally important factor is that Stalin's successors, like Alexander II, are themselves committed to the correction of abuses and cautious reform from above in the system they have inherited. To this end they are anxious to enlist the collaboration of society which they can obtain only by ceding it some measure of autonomy. They are thus faced with the familiar dilemma of autocratic reformers —how to exploit pressure from below without, however, allowing it to get out of hand.

The difficulties involved in this situation, which entails much face-saving accommodation on both sides, are well illustrated by the course of the literary controversy since March, 1953. At first, it appeared to be the continuation of a 'discussion' inaugurated by a *Pravda* leading article on the backwardness of Soviet drama about a year before Stalin's death.[2] In a manner

[1] Literaturnaya Moskva. Vol. II. Ed. M. I. Aliger. Moscow, 1956.

[2] *Pravda*, April 7, 1952.

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characteristic of Stalin's methods this article attacked the writers for a state of affairs which had been brought about by his own policy. In sheer self-defence against the critics armed with the Central Committee's resolutions on art and literature, the writers had taken refuge in the 'theory of lack of conflict' (now denounced as pernicious and ascribed to the luckless anti-patriotic drama critics who had actually been 'unmasked and smashed' for their opposition to it!) and the standard plot (*shablon*) of the 'struggle between the good and the better.' Rather than expose themselves to the charge of slandering Soviet reality, they 'varnished' it. By 1952 empty theatres demonstrated that Soviet man, far from being edified by the stage projection of his ideal self, was merely bored. *Pravda* now blandly declared that the backwardness of drama could only be overcome by the production of satirical plays and the emergence of Soviet Gogols and Shchedrins. There were, it said, still many 'survivals of the past and difficulties which could not be glossed over but which must be cauterised by the fire of satire.' This astonishing appeal sparked off the inevitable orgy of critical and self-critical recriminations, but only two satires (by Virta and Panferov) were forthcoming. Both were immediately denounced for naturalism and distortion of Soviet reality. It was beyond the wit of man to devise a satirical formula which would satisfy the definition of 'typicality' without implying that the phenomena or types satirised are the product of and inherent in the Soviet system. As the recent criticism of Dudintsev's *Not By Bread Alone* has shown, this is still the major difficulty for Soviet writers.

Another major difficulty which has still not been solved also emerged at this time. It was all very well to ask Soviet writers to become Gogols and Shchedrins, but there was no guarantee that the first 'Gogol' to present himself would not be treated in the same way as Zoshchenko had been in 1946. But the rehabilitation of Zoshchenko which was cautiously proposed by some bold spirits—notably Virta—in 1952 as the condition for the writers' support of *Pravda's* appeal, would have been tantamount to repudiating the whole of the Party's policy towards literature. Writing in *Bolshevik*, A. Surkov rejected the suggestion in terms which have been repeated at intervals during the last four years: 'N. Virta's assertions may induce some dramatists who have written mediocre plays to think that it may now be possible to smuggle in these old works, that the time has come, perhaps, to revise some just condemnations . . . and there are some who assume that now one may also consider re-evaluating the old writings of Zoshchenko, since, so they say, he depicted the negative side of our life. Such a point of view has nothing in common with the real task of Soviet literature and Soviet criticism. For, after all, Zoshchenko did not, in his old works, write like a man fighting the shortcoming of our life by means of pointed satire, but like a besmircher who blackened our reality and distorted it by a one-sided representation of the seamy sides of our everyday life which were overdrawn to the utmost. He wrote lies about the Soviet people.' This was the first of a long series of rejoinders to the demand for repudiation of the Central Committee's resolutions as a price for intellectual collaboration with the régime. How little the Party's attitude on this question has changed may be seen by comparing Surkov's statement with an article in *Kommunist*—the successor to *Bolshevik*—for August, 1955. According to the authors of this article, A. A. Zhdanov's report on the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, 'which explained the well-known decree of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U./b/' contains 'profoundly correct ideas.' Its only fault was that it contained certain factual errors and incorrect generalisations. The chief of these was that in tracing Zoshchenko's wickedness to his membership of the 'Serapion Brothers' in the 'twenties, Zhdanov has based himself on quotations from L. Lunts, the ideologue of the group (who held that literature should stand apart from politics) but failed to mention that the 'Serapion Brothers' played a positive rôle as the cradle of such Socialist Realist stalwarts as Fedin, Tikhonov and Vs. Ivanov. However, despite his incorrect generalisation about the 'Serapion Brothers,' Zhdanov's criticism of Zoshchenko's autobiographical sketch 'Before Sunrise' and the story 'The Adventures of an Ape'—which provoked the first in the series of Central Committee resolutions—was 'just.' This is some advance on Surkov's remarks in

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Bolshevik, but it is noteworthy that the mistakes admitted are of a minor character and do not detract from the essential 'correctness' of the resolutions. Again in February, 1957, *Kommunist* emphatically defends them against 'revisionism' and re-asserts their abiding application to the problems of Soviet literature. The recent staging of Agatha Christie's 'Witness for the Prosecution' by several Soviet theatres shows that 'the danger against which the resolution on the repertoire of dramatic theatres was directed has not disappeared even today. Another serious defect, noted in the resolution, *i.e.*, the ideological feebleness of many plays written by Soviet authors on modern subjects, the pettiness of their themes and of the problems they deal with, has also not been eliminated.' Similarly, 'the example of *Novy Mir* [*i.e.*, its publication of Dudintsev and others] proves that the resolution of the Central Committee on the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* in that part which is directed against the publication of ideologically empty, harmful productions is still being carried out in a feeble way, and not by all periodicals.' A reference to the *Pravda* leader of 1952 underlines the continuity of the Party's ideas on literature: 'The appeal of the Party to raise the biting force of our satire to the level of the satire of Gogol and Shchedrin has been wrongly understood by some people [a masterly understatement!]. They forget that the satire of Gogol and particularly of Shchedrin was directed towards shaking the foundations of the social order which existed at that time . . . the purpose of our satire is to *assert* the Soviet system through a criticism of shortcomings.'

The confrontation of these articles from *Kommunist* brings home the extent to which the Party approach to literature has become fossilised. Apart from the admission of a few minor errors and of some distortions in the execution or interpretation of essentially correct doctrine (due to 'the cult of personality') one can perceive very little change in language and the mode of thought reflected by it. If one were to judge solely by articles of this sort in the 'official press' one would have to conclude that Stalin's death had not made any great difference, at least as far as literature is concerned. It is only when one compares the relatively static 'official' line with the 'unofficial' arguments and, more particularly, with literary practice that one realises how far-reaching the change has been.

In the months after Stalin's death the sterile 'discussion' of 1952 gradually broadened out into a true controversy which, though it was still mainly in the form of an enquiry into the backwardness of drama, soon became a post-mortem on Soviet literature as a whole. At first, significantly, it was the main Stalinist control —control through fear—which was attacked implicitly in descriptions of the restraint imposed upon themselves by writers and editors. The playwright A. Salynski wrote: 'The theory of lack of conflict still operates, guiding the minds of some comrades who direct the fate of dramatic works. But the saddest thing is that some writers have not freed themselves from the "internal censor" which for so long sat at the side of the writer and bound his thought, his tongue, saying: "This is possible, but this is impossible."' 'But why,' inquires Salynski of an imaginary interlocutor, 'should anything actually be impossible? After all, Soviet writers, even when sharply criticising negative phenomena of our life, affirm the positive ideal of the Communist way of life!' To this the imaginary interlocutor replies: 'Yes, that's so, but what if our . . . well . . . enemies think badly of us?'[3] This reply, put in the hesitant way reproduced here is in itself an example of the 'internal censor' in operation and shows clearly the lack of franchise and affected disingenuousness which was, and still is, characteristic of the post-Stalin literary debate. These attacks on the 'internal censor,' as well as on the 'reinsuring' habits (*perestrakhovka*) of editors, while they tended to deflect criticism from the system to its victims, nevertheless amounted to an indirect indictment of it. But by the end of 1953, not only various aspects of censorship, but the very conception of party control of literature came under fire.

In October, two playwrights complained in strong language about the activities of *Glavrepertkom*[4]. They revealed that all the plays

[3] *Literary Gazette*, October 20, 1953.

[4] Lavrenyov and Pimenov in *Literary Gazette*, October 15, 1953.

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written in the country had to be passed for performance by a small committee of four men who could not possibly cope with the work, so that new plays were held up for very long periods and, even when eventually passed, had often been changed in a very arbitrary fashion. This agitation against *Glavrepertkom*, which had now become the principal scapegoat for the failings of Soviet drama, met with official approval—no doubt because it was in line with the general trend towards decentralisation—and *Glavrepertkom* was liquidated.

It is difficult to say whether or not this was a genuine victory for pressure from below, but on balance it seems most likely that it was simply a case of the authorities rectifying what was, after all, a most blatant example of over-centralisation. *Glavrepertkom* was replaced by what seems at first sight a most democratic arrangement whereby the theatres make independent contracts with individual playwrights and are freed even from the surveillance of the 'artistic councils' appointed from above or from outside by the Ministry of Culture. The change may have been an improvement for the theatre managements, but from the point of view of the playwrights the victory appears to have been a hollow one: the centralised control of Moscow has been replaced by hydra-headed local control which is characterised by the ingrained habits of editorial re-insurance. The playwright Alexander Kron comments acidly on the reform: 'In recent times such a large number of people and organisations with pretensions to editorial functions have sprung up that it has become a catastrophe. In all the contracts concluded between theatres and dramatists there is a clause to the effect that the author is obliged, on the demand of the theatre, to make any changes and corrections; in case of refusal he is threatened with material sanctions. Any current campaign, say, the struggle with drunkenness, may serve as a pretext for re-fashioning a play which is already being staged.'[5]

Note.—The second part of this study will be published in a forthcoming issue.

[5] *Literaturnaya Moskva*, Vol. II.

DISCUSSING WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

by W.W.

THE fate of Soviet philosophy under Stalin makes a sad story which still remains to be told. The treatment accorded to Western philosophies was symptomatic of the state of affairs in philosophy as a whole: Apart from a few pages of invective, of the 'Western-philosophy-in-the-service - of - the- warmongers' type, literally nothing was published about contemporary philosophic thought in the West. Since the twentieth Soviet C.P. congress there has been a gradual change. It is true that the Soviet attitude towards non-Soviet philosophy is as hostile as before, but at least articles and books on this subject are now appearing. The greatest achievement so far, both quantitatively and qualitatively, is a collection of essays published by the Philosophical Institute of the Academy of Sciences, *Contemporary Subjective Idealism* (*Sovremenny Sub'ektivny Idealizm*, Moscow, 1957), a volume of more than 500 pages which attempts a refutation of some leading Western schools of thinking. There has been nothing like it for 25 years or more.

It contains an introductory chapter and seven sections, of which four deal with neo-Positivism, two with Existentialism, and one with Pragmatism. Using Western standards, a great deal could be said about the level of philosophical exposition and debate, even in their present improved form. The essays reveal a not too extensive knowledge of the Western philosophers dealt with, the quotations are arbitrary, the sources frequently secondhand; there is no real debate, since each and every Western philosopher is viewed as being in the tradition either of Duehring, or of Mach and Avenarius, because these were the thinkers Engels and Lenin had dealt with. And if few, if any, contemporary Western thinkers fit into these categories, so much the worse for them.

Traces of the traditional invective still remain: Western socialists are occasionally referred to as 'pro-fascist,' and all Western schools of thought without exception are described as adjuncts of

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the 'arsenal of imperialism.' Nevertheless, these essays represent a definite step forward in comparison with the state of affairs five, ten, or fifteen years ago. In the past, essays of this kind have occasionally been published by Communist writers outside the Soviet Union (for example Selsam in the United States, Cornforth in England, Garaudy in France) but never in Russia. This new venture compels Soviet philosophers to read Western philosophy and to try to understand it. And since they have now apparently come to the conclusion that mere incompatibility with Lenin's *Empiriocriticism* no longer provides an adequate criterion, they try to launch their critique from other points of vantage, sometimes not without skill, searching out the weaknesses in each school.

There is, however, nothing specifically Soviet or Communist in this kind of critique. The main interest of the work does not lie in the content of its argumentation. It would be idle to expect a serious attempt at discussion, since the task of Soviet philosophers, as Khrushchev put it, is 'to go on unmasking bourgeois ideology, to expose its anti-popular character and its reactionary content' (p. 3). What the symposium does give is a fairly accurate indication of what problems and features in Western philosophy are preoccupying Soviet philosophers more than others.

The interest in and the sharp attack on neo-positivism and pragmatism are typical. Many Western students would regard these schools as being nearer than most others to dialectical materialism—much nearer, for instance, than the classical Indian philosophy which is now getting such a favourable reception in the Soviet philosophical press. One does not need to have any expert knowledge of international relations today to divine the reason for this. But it is not the only reason. Indian classical philosophy is not regarded by Soviet philosophers as a serious competitor, whereas pragmatism and neo-positivism are considered dangerous precisely because of their appeal. Time and again there are warnings against the 'anti-capitalist demagogy, the pseudo-democratic phrases, and the pseudo-scientific approach of pragmatism' (p. 38). 'Dewey managed to gain an influence over the upper strata of the American working class' (p. 129), and this constitutes an 'immense danger for the American proletariat.' The author of the essay on Dewey is, however, somewhat inconsistent in his description of 'Pragmatism—the Philosophy of Imperialism' (the subheading of a chapter, p. 134). A few pages further on he says that Dewey was the fashionable philosopher during the isolationist period between the two world wars, whereas recently Niebuhr has been more in vogue because he claims to know all the answers as far as America's manifest destiny is concerned. In the end, however, the impression is gained that none of these nuances is of any great consequence because 'pragmatism and Niebuhr's religious philosophy stand on the same ground and merge into each other' (p. 139).

Neo-positivism, which gets the lion's share (300 pages) in this book, is belived to be dangerous because it 'deflects both part of the popular masses and some Western scientists from a correct, Communist understanding of the world.' There are among the neo-positivists 'some honest people' who have to be shown that their pretended objectivity and their 'sober scepticism' really serve as a 'cover for hostility to both science and the democratic movement' (p. 140). Hostility to 'the only true and scientific philosophy, dialectical materialism, is the tie between neo-positivism and imperialist reaction' (p. 203).

It should be stated, in fairness, that some of the essays are less given to invective; the one on 'Neo-positivism and philosophical questions in physics' (a polemic against Bridgman and Frank) is on an incomparably higher level than the introductory essay, which attempts to refute (in 34 pages) virtually everything that has been done in the West during the last fifty years in all the social sciences, from Santayana to Malinovski, and from Aldous Huxley to Karl Haushofer (!). To bring these, and many other writers, within the compass of a single common denominator is an undeniable achievement, but the result is not impressive. In contrast the more detailed studies of Karl Jaspers (pp. 424-474) and Gabriel Marcel (pp. 475-526) betray a more workmanlike knowledge of Western thinking. There is an obvious omission between these two articles on 'The reactionary essence of German Existentialism' (Jaspers) and 'French Catholic Existentialism—the philosophy of irrationalism

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and mysticism' (Marcel). Camus is mentioned once (p. 482) as the proponent of an untenable 'atheist existentialism,' but the conspicuous absence of Sartre can only mean that the essay on him was written prior to Budapest and to Sartre's vehement anti-Soviet criticism, and then withdrawn. We are given to understand that debate is not excluded with the left-wing Catholic existentialists (*Esprit*) who 'sincerely wish to find a way out of the social crisis of our time—there is no reason to fear [*sic*] such a debate' (p. 526). On the whole, however, we are advised not to attribute much importance to this apparent 'democratisation' and 'switch towards the left' among left-wing Catholics. 'Between real democracy and demagogy there is an abyss.'

The preoccupation of Soviet philosophers with neo-positivism is perhaps only natural, since it is allied with similar heresies in Soviet philosophy—a fact that is occasionally admitted. This refers to the inclination shown by Soviet physicists (and other scientists) to disregard philosophical theory altogether in their work, and to their belief that they can get on very well without it. It is possible to argue that some of the greatest physicists of our time (Einstein being invariably mentioned in this context) made their discoveries despite and not as a result of their philosophical (neo-positivist) views. But the same argument can be used with regard to Soviet physicists, who have to investigate a more and more complex reality for which the beliefs of Engels and Lenin cannot possibly provide guidance.

Within the rather wide field covered by their definition of neo-positivism the Soviet contributors to this volume make some distinctions: They like Goedel more than Bertrand Russell, and Born more than Pascal Jordan; they prefer Planck and Lane to Heisenberg and Bohr, and they profoundly dislike Popper and the semanticists. They welcome the 'retreat' of de Broglie and some other leading Western physicists from the positivist conception of quantum mechanics, though it seems somewhat exaggerated to contend, as they do, that these scientists are now in the process of becoming 'dialectical materialists,' if they have not already done so.

Some excerpts from *Contemporary Subjective Idealism*

The uses of philosophical idealism

At the present time subjective idealism is pursuing certain definite aims which differ basically from those concrete tasks which the subjective idealism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries set itself. Subjective idealism propagates with particular ardour views that are hostile to the advanced materialist *Weltanschauung*, views according to which the popular masses are incapable of moving history forward, of managing their own destiny. Subjective idealism, now so assiduously cultivated in the countries of the capitalist camp, energetically propagates the subjective-idealist view of the rôle of the individual in history; it aspires to reduce the popular masses to passivity and thus to help the ruling exploiters to perpetuate their rule over the masses of the exploited millions (p. 6).

Dewey and Pragmatism

The most important feature of pragmatism . . . is pluralism. This is the irrationalist understanding of the world, the denial of its unity and reality and of its subjection to natural laws. The 'pluralist cosmos' is a chaotic stream of accidental events or situations, devoid of any internal necessary tie, that is, not subject to any necessary laws (p. 101).

Dewey thunders against the aristocratic philosophy of the idle rich. . . . But in fact haughtiness, arrogance, and scorn for the popular masses, for their productive work and the knowledge they acquire, is typical of pragmatism as well as of all bourgeois philosophy (p. 109).

Pragmatism denies objective reality and the fact that its development is subject to laws; it is therefore a philosophy that expresses not the might of man, but his weakness in face of the laws of nature and society. It is a philosophy of adventurism (p. 111).

Dewey thought the school was the key for resolving the most important contemporary social problems. For him these amounted, at bottom, to the problem of maintaining and strengthening the capitalist system in the United States. In the field of pedagogics Dewey's demagogy reaches its highest point. While

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attacking the real and pretended shortcomings of the old school, describing it as a school of drill and cramming, Dewey contrasts it with a system of education that would in effect make the education of the normal child quite impossible (p. 121).

Neo-positivism and Marxism

The neo-positivists have declared more than once that historical materialism has been finally superseded and replaced by a 'new theory.' How do the neo-positivists hope to replace Marxism ? By a mixture of Freudism and social behaviourism. Freudism prevails in the discourse of contemporary positivists in connection with individual questions of social life, while behaviourism and cybernetic sociology prevail in their works on general sociological subjects (p. 210).

Karl Jaspers and the decline of imperialism

Jaspers is called the 'philosopher of tragic failure' not by accident. This failure is of course typical only for the imperialist bourgeoisie and its ideologists, but they wish to present the inescapable destruction of capitalism as a catastrophe that will involve all mankind. Our time, says Jaspers (in *Rechenschaft und Ausblick*) is a time of 'spiritual and material catastrophe,' thus ascribing the characteristics of the crisis of capitalism to the non-capitalist socialist states, in which material and spiritual progress unprecedented in history is being achieved (p. 457).

On existentialism

In attacking rationalist philosophies in general, the existentialists hardly ever differentiate between materialist and idealist rationalism. However, they regard materialism, the rationalism of materialist philosophy, as their main enemy, and the reason is quite obvious. Idealism, in whatever form, is not incompatible with a religious *Weltanschauung*; on the contrary, it paves the way to religion (p. 502).

The haughty, scornful attitude towards the popular masses is perhaps the most repulsive feature of Catholic existentialism, its most sinister characteristic (p. 513).

The critique of 'contemporary society' by the Catholic existentialists merely serves the aim of camouflaging existentialism, though the material they provide may be used by their readers to very different purpose, because it conveys a certain notion of the defects of capitalist society. Generally speaking, for a full understanding of the characteristics of the idealist trends, one must take account of the views not only of the propagandists but also of those for whom their propaganda is destined (p. 525).

DOCTRINAL CHANGE

by Leopold Labedz

LENIN once expressed the desire to see 'a society of friends of the Hegelian dialectic,' composed of philosophical materialists. Dialectic was for him 'the soul of revolutionary theory,' and dialectical development implied that nothing could retain its essence but was eventually due for 'necessary destruction'—a formula used by Marx in *Capital*. Engels' ontology was a further source for Lenin's belief that 'contradictions are of the essence of things' (*Philosophical Notebooks*).

The left Hegelian who stood his master on his head criticised him for representing the Prussian state as the *terminus ad quem* of history. This seemed to Marx inconsistent with the dialectical conception of history. He himself could escape the dilemma of teleological history versus the Heracleitan conception of it only by projecting the two postulates into the future and by not being too specific about them.

The left Marxist who turned his teacher inside out by a voluntaristic interpretation of his theory brought the dilemma back to earth. By seizing power Lenin reversed the traditional Marxist relationship between base and superstructure, and also put on the agenda the problem of the dialectic of the Soviet state.

Already in Switzerland, in a discussion with Bukharin, Lenin had touched on the question of the place of dialectics in socialist society. Marx and Engels had provided little guidance for his thinking on this subject. Vague generalities about the leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom which was to end the period of human 'pre-history' could hardly be applied to specific political and historical circumstances. Nor could the postulated end of the class struggle after the period

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of transition to socialism throw much light on the medium through which the dialectic would operate in the new society. Lenin tried to bridge the gap by distinguishing between antagonisms and contradictions, an idea which has been elaborated over the past forty years by a long succession of Soviet philosophers and Communist ideologues in general (including Mao Tse-tung).

But the concept of antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions was destined to make a career only later, when the ideological implications of the proclamation of the achievement of socialism in the Soviet Union had to be tackled, *i.e.*, after 1934. The immediate problem on which attention was centred after 1917 was, of course, the rôle of the new state.

The idea of the withering away of the state was still taken seriously at that time. Both Marx, in his little-known comments on Bakunin, and Lenin, in his *State and Revolution*, contemplated quite seriously a notion which, from today's perspective, looks like an infantile fantasy. After 1917 various ramifications of the general proposition took root, subordinate theories predicting the withering away of this and the withering away of that with the advent of socialism. In the 'twenties Soviet lawyers prophesied the disappearance of law, Soviet educationists the disappearance of schools, and Soviet artists (Meyerhold!) the disappearance of art. Only the priests had no chance to preach the withering away of their *raison d'être*, since the disappearance of religion under victorious socialism was taken for granted.

But when socialism was in fact proclaimed all these expectations were confounded. The state in particular, that supreme reflection of class antagonisms and the supreme test of their dialectical resolution, showed no signs of surrendering any of its functions. On the contrary, it was becoming evermore embracing. Soviet ideologists were once again facing the old dilemma in an acute form: As they could no longer envisage the death of the state they had to adjust themselves to what M. Chambre calls the death of the dialectic.

Trotskyists and other heretics could point to the continued existence of the state in the Soviet Union as immaculate proof that socialism had not been achieved there. The syllogism demonstrating the incompatibility of the state and socialist society is unanswerable on Marxist premises. But in practice there was no alternative. The real question was not the existence but the character of the state. Nevertheless the disappointed theoreticians of the permanent revolution from below continued on this score to accuse its practitioners from above of treachery. The latter, in their turn, continued to justify terror in ideological terms while retaining residual notions of the theory of the withering away of the state. Stalin, justifying its continued existence, told the sixteenth Party Congress that 'any dialectical thinker must understand that, in order eventually to wither away, the state must first grow stronger.' Later he developed the idea that it was necessary to strengthen the state before it could disappear in a letter to one Ivanov, which thereupon became the main ideological text on the question. Thus Engels' second dialectical law, the interpenetration of opposites, could with a little manipulation be used to explain the evolution of the Soviet state. But in effect the question of its transformation was relegated to limbo. The withering away of the state, like the second advent, ceased to be an earthly consideration arousing real expectations.

After the war the evolution of Soviet ideology on this subject went even further: the state, previously regarded as a transitional phenomenon, became an object of positive praise and was presented as a necessary institution under socialism and also under Communism. In the words of P. F. Yudin, 'the Soviet state is the main force, the main instrument for the construction of socialism and the building of Communist society.'[1]

The next step in revising the Marxist theory of the state was taken by Stalin in his *Marxism and the Problems of Linguistics*. In this treatment of an esoteric topic a place was found in the doctrinal sphere, for the first time since 1917, to admit the changed rôle of the 'superstructure,' a change previously acknowledged in practice but not in theory. Naturally the admission was not explicit, but the theoretical implications of Stalin's announcement of the

[1] *On Soviet Socialist Society*, Moscow, 1948, p.22.

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independent rôle of language were only too obvious. Once an admission of this kind was made, other elements of the 'superstructure' could also be interpreted in a similar way.

In the post-Stalin period M. Kammari, the editor of *Voprosy Filosofii*, dealt with the subject in a programmatic article 'On some problems of the theory of base and superstructure' (*Kommunist*, 1956, 10). He criticised some 'imprecise formulations' in *Marxism and the Problems of Linguistics*, but carefully preserved Stalin's most fundamental revisionist proposition, making only some insignificant modifications of certain 'incorrect statements.' *Kommunist* explains that in the discussion which followed the publication of the article 'some comrades had accused Stalin of revisionism.' This, however, was an unfounded charge, and Alexandrov, who made it, 'himself interprets dogmatically and uncritically one of Marx's theses.' Stalin's work played 'an important part in elucidating the specific characteristics of language as a social phenomenon. . . . The thesis that, inherent in social phenomena, there are, together with their general characteristics and functions, also their own characteristic specific traits, their own functions and internal laws of development, is applicable to all spheres of spiritual (*dukhovny*) culture, to all elements of the superstructure of society.' *Kommunist* concludes this esoteric discussion by stating categorically that 'there is nothing incorrect in Stalin's thesis' if only it is not 'interpreted one-sidedly and dogmatically,' but is 'understood dialectically and not metaphysically.'[1]

The last word in the Soviet dialectical treatment of the Marxist theory of the state is given by V. V. Nikolaev in an article 'On the stages of development of the Soviet socialist state.'[2] The division of Soviet history into two basic periods, made by Stalin in a speech at the eighteenth C.P.S.U. Congress, is in essentials accepted. 'The forty years of experience of the Soviet Union shows that his theses on the basic stages and fundamental tasks and functions of the Soviet state need only some corrections and additions reflecting the objective, concrete historical process of development of our state.' Pointing to one such correction, Nikolaev writes that 'Stalin regards the administrative-organisational and cultural-educational work of the state organs as one function of the Soviet state.' That is incorrect. 'The sphere of spiritual culture represents an autonomous sphere of state activity.'

On the general course of development Nikolaev is in full agreement with Stalin. The basic phases of the development of the Soviet state are:

'(a) The period of the revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism, and (b) the period of the completion of the construction of socialism and the gradual transition to Communism. . . . As Stalin correctly noted, in the first phase, connected with the task of suppressing the overthrown classes, the exploiting classes are liquidated. Thereafter the function of suppressing the overthrown classes no longer exists. In the conditions of struggle between the socialist and capitalist systems, the function of defence from external attack is preserved and developed, the Soviet army and navy are strengthened, as well as the repressive and intelligence agencies of the Soviet state required for the struggle against spies, wreckers, and diversionists sent into our country by foreign intelligence services.'

The writer also deals with the future of the Soviet state:

'What are the prospects of further development of the Soviet state? Is the second basic phase of development of the Soviet state the last one, or is the future transition of the state to a new, third phase possible?

'With the completion of the building of Communism in the U.S.S.R. all the internal tasks of the Soviet state will be accomplished. But with the continuing existence of the capitalist camp, the task of the defence of the country still remains. Furthermore, the task of co-ordinating the economic and cultural development of countries in the socialist camp, and of strengthening and developing economic and cultural ties with other countries, will play an evermore important rôle. The transition of the Soviet state into the third stage of its development will be determined by further fundamental changes in the economic basis, in the class structure of Soviet society, as it passes from a socialist to a Communist economy. The

[1] *Kommunist*, 1957, 4, p. 46.

[2] *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1957, 4, p. 10.

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achievement of Communism will bring about fundamental qualitative changes in all the elements of the socialist basis. A single form of property in the means of production will be established, the public property of the Communist society. In connection with the liquidation of the essential difference between town and village, and between mental and manual labour, fundamental changes in the social structure will occur: the class division of Soviet society will be liquidated. The workers, peasants, and intelligentsia will all become labourers of the Communist society. At the same time, on the basis of the vigorous development of productive forces, the Communist principle "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," will be established.'

Among all these desirable goals to be achieved under Communism the disappearance of the state is not even mentioned.[1] Khrushchev, using the familiar Marxist metaphor, consigned to the museum of antiquities, after the successful launching of the Soviet satellite, the bomber and not the state.

However, *Kommunist* still maintains that 'the movement of society towards Communist forms of life is an objective process determined by the development of production and by economic laws which operate independently of the will and consciousness of man.'[2] The Party, in the theses published for the 40th anniversary of the revolution, claims that 'the establishment of a Communist society in our country is already not a remote but an immediate practical target.'[3]

In the history of Soviet thought the transition to Communism is intrinsically connected with the concept of the law of value, a fundamental law of Marxist political economy.

Engels in *Anti-Duehring* categorically rejected the idea that socialist economy is compatible with commodity production, *i.e.*, with money and exchange. For a time Lenin believed that War Communism could provide a short-cut to the direct management of production and distribution, but in 1921 he accepted a provisional retreat in the form of N.E.P. Soviet economists in the 'twenties argued that the law of value will not operate under socialism, *i.e.*, that the price-mechanism will have no place in a planned economy. Preobrazhenski maintained that with the victory of socialism 'the law of value will wither away.'[1] Lapidus and Ostrovitianov, in their well-known text-book of political economy, also expressed the idea that the law of value in the Soviet economy 'is in process of withering away.'[2] At the 17th congress of the Party Stalin stated that 'trade and money will remain in existence until the complete victory of Communism.' But generally in the 'thirties, which witnessed the official establishment of socialism, there was a discreet silence on the subject.

The first variant of the new official *Manual of Economics* was presented to Stalin in January, 1941, and was criticised for an orthodox presentation of the problem. The thesis was then formulated, for the first time, that the law of value does operate under socialism, but in a 'changed form.'[3] This doctrine of socialist economic transubstantiation was advanced until 1952. In 1943 the theoretical organ of the Party, *Under the Banner of Marxism*, dealt with the question openly. In a programmatic article[4] it attacked the teaching of a political economy which 'denied the operation of the law of value in a socialist society.' In 1952 Stalin took the next step by publishing *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.* He asserted categorically that laws cannot be 'transformed,' they can only be 'mastered.' The law of value has not been transformed; 'it does exist and operate under the socialist system' within the limited bounds of commodity production. With the disappearance of commodity production 'value and its forms and the law of value also

[1] The text-book of *Political Economy* (Moscow, 1954, p. 558) still mentions Stalin's report to the 18th Congress of the Party in which he asserted that the state will wither away in the U.S.S.R. but only 'if the capitalist encirclement is replaced by a socialist one.'

[2] 1957, 6, pp. 8-9.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1957, 13, p. 23.

[1] *The New Economics*, Moscow, 1926, p. 37.

[2] *Political Economy and the Theory of Soviet Economy*, Moscow, 1928, p. 132.

[3] W. Brus, in *Economists Debate the Law of Value*, Warsaw, 1956, p. 12.

[4] 1943, No. 7-8.

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disappear. In the second phase of Communist society, the amount of labour expended on the production of goods will be measured not in a roundabout way, not in terms of value and its forms, as is the case under commodity production, but directly and immediately, by the amount of time, the number of hours, expended on the production of goods.' Nor will the distribution of labour among the different branches of production be regulated by the law of value, 'which will have ceased to function by that time.'

The subsequent elaboration of the problem continued to reflect the tension between considerations of economic rationality and their doctrinal implications. During the entire Soviet period the economists could not deal comprehensively with the former, nor the ideological functionaries concentrate exclusively on the latter. Discussion reflected both the practical preoccupations of the leadership and the doctrinal limitations within which it was bound.

The economic debate is analysed extensively elsewhere in this issue. The 'philosophical' aspects of the question of transition to Communism, now a practical target for the immediate future, have been elaborated in *Voprosy Filosofii*, which recently dedicated to it its department of 'discussion and debate.'

In 1955 Ts. A. Stepanian published in *Voprosy Filosofii* (No. 2) an article on 'Contradictions in the development of socialist society and ways of overcoming them,' developing Stalin's thesis from the *Economic problems of socialism in the U.S.S.R.* The essential contradiction of socialism, he wrote, is the one 'between the ever-growing needs of the population and the level of the production of material and cultural goods at any given time.' This thesis was attacked by the economist Ya. A. Kronrod in an article 'On the problem of economic contradictions under socialism' (*Voprosy Filosofii*, 1956, No. 2), in which he argued that all economic relations under socialism are contradictory and disputed the pragmatic validity of Stepanian's (and Stalin's) proposition.

The same line of reasoning is pursued by I. I. Konnik, who criticises Stalin for the assertion that 'in the U.S.S.R. the growth of consumption (purchasing power) of the masses consistently runs ahead of the growth of production.' Konnik points out that 'the growth of consumption cannot *all the time* outstrip the growth of production. If by consumption we understand purchasing power (and they are far from being the same), this would in effect mean that inherent in the socialist economy is a chronic deficit of goods, *i.e.*, the unresolved contradiction between the growing purchasing power of the population and the constant relative lagging behind in the development of production. Furthermore, it is uncertain whether this contradiction has a positive effect in stimulating production, as it is known that a famine in goods generates all sorts of abuses by the industrial enterprises, in regard to production, quality, etc. If on the other hand we understand by consumption the growing *needs* of the masses (and they are far from being the same), then, as Marx has shown, this contradiction is inherent in general in the dialectical unity of production and consumption and cannot be regarded as a specific contradiction inherent in the socialist economy only.'[1]

Thus, in Marxist terminology, Konnik poses the problem of the rôle of inflationary pressure in the Soviet economy. But he has to explain it in dialectical terms: 'The unity of the system of the economic laws of socialism does not exclude but presupposes the possibility of the appearance under certain conditions of contradictions between different economic laws. . . . This applies particularly to the law of value, to the economic law of distribution according to labour, and to a certain degree also to the essential economic law of socialism and the law of planned, harmonious development of the national economy. . . . These contradictions, resulting from the very nature of economic laws, have a more or less enduring character, that is, emerging in a determined concrete form, they are overcome, but then reappear in a new form. The overcoming of these contradictions, reflecting the real contradictions of economic reality, is the essence of the movement forward, of the development of the socialist economy.' The subtle dialectical point whether it is the existence of contradictions or their resolution which is the 'source of development' from socialist into Communist economy became a

[1] *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1957, 1, p. 176.

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subject of contention between Stepanian and other participants in the discussion and reflects different political attitudes. Stepanian asserted that it is not only the resolution of the contradiction but the existence of the contradiction itself which is a source of development. This is disputed by E. T. Lukina in an article 'Not contradictions but their resolution sets the movement forward' (*Voprosy Filosofii*, 1957, 3, p. 132). Another participant in the debate, F. T. Krivoruchko, criticised Kronrod for 'expressing the opinion held by some of our economists and philosophers, that a given contradiction does not represent a particular manifestation of the essential contradiction under socialism, as it is common, ultimately, to all social production and therefore cannot express the deepest essence of socialist production.' Krivoruchko admits that 'the contradiction between production and the needs of society is common to all social production,' but he declares nevertheless that it 'expresses the deepest essence of socialist production.' He differentiates between the essential and basic contradiction of the period of transition from socialism to Communism: 'The contradiction which expresses the specific character of this period is the contradiction between the state and kolkhoz-co-operative forms of property.' He goes on to say: 'The mistake made by some of our philosophers and economists was not that they regarded as the main task of the contemporary period the transformation of kolkhoz-co-operative property into state property. Their error consisted in regarding this task as the next on the list, and not a long-term one, to be resolved gradually in the course of the entire period of transition from socialism to Communism, as the contradiction between these two forms of socialist property is gradually resolved. They made this mistake because they overlooked or underestimated the gradualness of the solution of the non-antagonistic contradictions. . . . Their second source of error was to think of the contradiction between the public and kolkhoz-co-operative forms of property as an obstacle to development, ignoring the most important thing: the forces determining development. For this reason they argued that it is necessary to overcome the contradiction between the two forms of property which hinders and slows down the movement forward to Communism. We cannot agree with this view. The contradiction between the two forms of property is not an obstacle to their development. On the contrary, it acts as a moving force determining the gradual transformation of these two forms of property into a single public form of property. This, of course, does not mean that at a certain stage the contradiction between the two forms of property cannot become an obstacle. . . . But it follows from this that the contradiction between the two forms of property manifests itself as an obstacle to development not always but only at a certain stage. . . .'[1]

Thus the position of the peasant is still regarded as the most important question on the Soviet road to Communism. 'At a certain stage' the *kolkhozniki* may come to be regarded as 'an obstacle to further development.' On the other hand, the pressure from below, decollectivisation in 'other socialist countries' and the economic revisionism there which advocates 'admitting the law of value into the socialist economy,' *i.e.*, a wider use of the price-mechanism—all these factors pull the Soviet leadership in the opposite direction. The history of Soviet thought can be regarded either as a struggle of doctrine with reality, or as a process of its adjustment to reality. Both these factors play an important rôle in determining the outcome of political questions.

From the withering away of the state to the spiritual autonomy of the state, from the withering away of the law of value to its euphemistic readmission—these are only the more outstanding examples of the transformations on the dialectical road to Communism.

[1] *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1957, 4, p. 173.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom publishes this series in order to make available for general use documentation on Soviet cultural life. Edited by Walter Z. Laqueur, the series provides factual information from Soviet sources on the arts and sciences in the U.S.S.R. and on Soviet attitudes toward the non-Communist world.

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